

901 Smart City?

Ever since Lu Zhou's bedroom door was closed, Xiao Tong's attention had been glued to his bedroom.

Even though her mom warned her not to disturb her brother, when her parents were not watching, Xiao Tong secretly walked over there.

She gulped and pressed her ear on the door.

Hmm...

Why is it so quiet?

Isn't it supposed to be very loud?

While Xiao Tong was still pondering, that door opened...

"Ouch!"

Xiao Tong took half a step back and covered her forehead.

Lu Zhou froze for a second and looked at his sister.

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing..." Xiao Tong looked at Lu Zhou, then looked at Chen Yushan, and even though her forehead was hurting badly, she still curiously said,

"Brother... You guys were in there for a while... What were you doing?"

"Discussing some stuff."

Lu Zhou reached out and gently tapped on his sister's forehead. He ignored her exaggerated reaction and looked at Chen Yushan instead.

"I'll send you out."

"Okay." Chen Yushan smiled and nodded. She followed Lu Zhou and walked out of the room.

Mother Lu saw Lu Zhou and Chen Yushan walking toward the door, and she quickly came out of the kitchen.

She desperately wanted this pretty girl to stay here for longer, so she thought that her son must have screwed things up again.

“Oh, why are you leaving? Did my son offend you again, tell me what he did, I’ll punish him!”

Chen Yushan smiled and began explaining.

“Oh, nothing happened, auntie, I’m just here to talk about business with Lu Zhou. We’re done talking, so I won’t bother you guys.”

“You’re not bothering us at all! Speaking of which, you don’t have a place to stay in Jiangling, right? Why don’t you live in our house? After all, we have a spare bedroom.”

“That... isn’t the best idea.”

Chen Yushan twirled her fingers around her hair and tried to avoid eye contact.

Lu Zhou looked at his mother and couldn’t stand this anymore.

“Mom, stop giving her a hard time.”

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan.

“Let’s go.”

“Okay...”

After Chen Yushan left the house, Lu Zhou finally sighed in relief.

Thank god he stepped in.

He didn’t know why, but he felt like Chen Yushan was a little unhappy when she left...

Did she have more things to discuss with me?

Who knows...

Lu Zhou watched Chen Yushan walk away and went back into his house. He wanted to continue his mathematics research.

However, when he walked past the sofa in the living room, Xiao Tong playfully kicked his leg.

“What? What do you want?”

“You’re so dumb!”

“...?”

“That’s for hitting my forehead...” Xiao Tong said. She stuck her tongue out and went back to playing her mobile game.

As Lu Zhou looked at this girl, he was baffled.

Makes no sense.

Whatever...

Who cares.

Lu Zhou ignored her and went back into his room.

...

Lu Zhou sat at his desk before he continued his research. He decided to read through Chen Yushan’s document.

This document was titled “Smart City”, and it contained a lot of potential research directions with good market potential.

Some of them were quite realistic, such as the holographic communication system, wireless charging technology, etc.

Some of them were completely ridiculous, like maglev cars.

The idea was that if the Yangtze River Delta city group had the power of a controllable fusion reactor, the population density in Shanghai and its surrounding suburbs would rise to a whole new level.

The resulting traffic couldn’t be solved just by building more highways and overpasses; they had to go from a two-dimensional transportation grid to a three-dimensional transportation grid.

That was, let the car fly in the air instead of driving on the road.

This sounded like something out of a science fiction movie. Flying cars moving between high-rise buildings while equipped with fully automated artificial intelligence driving...

Of course, that kind of technology wasn't built in a day or two. However, it was definitely feasible. Star Sky Technology had world-leading research and development capabilities, they should preemptively begin research in these areas.

Just like how they were the first to capture the lithium-sulfur batteries market.

For every lithium-sulfur battery produced, Star Sky Technology took in a patent profit of no less than 10 USD.

If they could take the lead on inventing the technology that changed the way people lived their lives and begin registering patents, Star Sky Technology would become the most profitable company in the world...

However, what interested Lu Zhou wasn't the profitability of the plan, but rather the technologies itself.

"Smart city..."

I guess it's more like a future city.

Lu Zhou looked at the potential technologies in the plan and couldn't help but feel emotional.

This was the first time he felt this kind of sensation outside of his laboratory.

What will the future of China look like?

Twenty years ago, people said it would look like what Japan and America were right now.

But now...

We can define our own future.

...

Fifteen days after Chinese New Year, two major events took place.

The first major event was that Star Sky Technology, as well as the two aerospace companies, won a NASA bidding project for Lunar Gateway, which was valued at a total of US\$7 billion.

It also included US\$3 billion worth of launch missions, as well as manufacturing for countless aerospace components.

Due to trade protection policies, most of the projects fell into the hands of American companies such as Blue Origin, Space-X, Boeing, etc. Thus, China being able to steal a piece of the pie shocked the Americans.

Something like this would have never happened for the Ares program.

This reminded a lot of people of the 1970s, when the Apollo and Soyuz cooperated in low-Earth orbit.

After a series of intense competition, these two superpowers shook their hands and reached a consensus.

The Americans were surprised to see this handshake happen again, with a different country.

The second major event also happened in the aerospace field.

16 days after Chinese New Year...

Lu Zhou received a call from Beijing and immediately flew to Beijing. He was going to attend a conference that was crucial for the Chinese aerospace and international physics industry...

902 Meeting in Beijing

“Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to arrive at Beijing Capital International Airport. For your safety and comfort, please remain seated with your seatbelt fastened...”

Lu Zhou put away his notebook and pen.

He suddenly noticed the teenage boy next to him, who was wearing a baseball cap, was staring at his notebook.

Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows and smiled.

“Wondering what I was writing?”

The boy didn’t seem to recognize Lu Zhou, so he nodded and spoke.

“Uncle, I think I’ve seen that formula before.”

Lu Zhou laughed.

This little sh*t...

Calls me an uncle, then humble brags.

Seen this before?

You don't know who I am, but you've "seen" this equation before?

My as*!

Lu Zhou wanted to call him out but decided against it.

Lu Zhou ignored him, and after the seatbelt light turned off, he unfastened his seatbelt and walked off the airstair with Wang Peng carrying his bags.

The boy didn't seem to care about Lu Zhou ignoring him. Instead, he pondered for a while and suddenly looked up.

"Oh, that's... the Riemann zeta function!

"I knew I saw it before! I think it was on last year's final IMO question..."

Wait a second...

This uncle is quite impressive!

He knows about the Riemann function?

But why is an old man like him doing IMO questions?

Suddenly, a chubby guy from behind patted his back.

"Bro, we're getting off the plane, stop daydreaming."

"Oh!" The guy quickly grabbed his luggage and said, "Okay, give me a second."

"Stop screwing around, we have to go."

"Okay, okay, coming!"

...

After Lu Zhou got off the plane, he saw someone familiar at the airport.

It was none other than Chen Yushan's father, Chen Baohua, who worked at the Organization Department of the Communist Party of China.

Even though Lu Zhou hadn't seen this man for a while, this well-groomed old man clearly recognized him.

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“Uncle Chen... nice to see you.”

“Hello, Academician Lu.” Chen Baohua nodded and made an inviting gesture.

“Get in the car.”

Chen Baohua was about to get in the driver’s seat.

However, Wang Peng stepped forward.

“I’ll take the wheel.”

Chen Baohua clearly recognized Wang Peng’s role, so he nodded and stepped aside.

“Ok.”

Thus, Lu Zhou and Chen Baohua sat together in the back seat.

They didn’t talk during the car ride, and Lu Zhou felt a little uncomfortable sitting there.

He didn’t know why, but Uncle Chen Baohua seemed to be a little reserved?

“My daughter went to your house during the holidays?”

Lu Zhou sat up straight and said, “Yeah... But she only stayed for a bit.”

“Oh, I see... No wonder.”

The old man sighed and stayed silent.

Lu Zhou wanted to chat with him, but Uncle Chen didn’t seem to look like he wanted to talk. Therefore, Lu Zhou placed his attention back onto the notebook inside his pocket.

This was his favorite way of killing time.

When he was immersed in the world of mathematics, a few hours felt like a few minutes...

...

This International Lunar Hadron Collider was held in Beijing’s city hall. More than 500 experts from the aerospace industry and physics community, as well as senior officials from participating countries, attended the meeting.

Even though this international conference was being organized by the State Administration for National Defense and China National Space Administration,

the specific preparation work was done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs department.

Four different hotels were arranged according to the participants' backgrounds.

During the duration of the conference, the entire 2nd Ring Road traffic was restricted. Lu Zhou could noticeably see that there were fewer cars on the road.

The car stopped at the entrance of the hotel. After getting out of the car, Chen Baohua spoke to Lu Zhou.

"This car is yours for now. You might have to stay in Beijing for a week or two, and it's more convenient to have a car."

Lu Zhou politely replied, "Thank you."

"You're welcome. It's not my car anyway, it's from the higher-ups."

Chen Baohua looked at his watch and said, "It's getting late, so I won't waste your precious time any longer. Feel free to come for a cup of tea at my house some time."

Chen Baohua nodded and gave Wang Peng the car key. He then turned around and walked away.

Wang Peng put the key in his pocket and spoke to Lu Zhou.

"I'll carry your luggage, you should go check-in at the hotel."

Lu Zhou nodded.

"Okay, thanks."

Even though the workers at a five-star hotel would normally take the guest's luggage upstairs, Lu Zhou's luggage was special. Even staff members that had passed background checks were not allowed to touch his luggage.

Lu Zhou was about to check-in at the hotel front desk when he suddenly noticed a familiar-looking man standing next to him.

The old man noticed Lu Zhou as well when he looked over and happened to make eye contact with Lu Zhou.

The old man smiled and spoke.

“Oh, Academician Lu, what a coincidence, we’re in the same hotel.”

“Academician Wang?” Lu Zhou smiled and reached out his hand. “Great to see you.”

This man was Academician Wang Shicheng, the former chairman of the China Mathematics Society, one of the top leaders in the Chinese mathematics community.

However, despite the enthusiastic greetings, the two of them were just acquaintances.

They hadn’t had the best interactions in the past.

One was the Shiing-Shen Chern Mathematics Award when Academician Wang was pressured by Old Qiu and had to give the prize to Lu Zhou. The second was the academician elections, where due to various political pressures, Academician Wang had to give his vote to Lu Zhou.

After all, the state wanted Lu Zhou to have the two academician titles as a show of appreciation for his work.

If somehow Lu Zhou weren’t awarded with the academician title, the blame would be on Academician Wang.

Actually, Academician Wang was quite impressed with Lu Zhou.

He had been in the mathematics field for decades, but even though he produced good research in knot theory, he had done less in his lifetime than Lu Zhou had done in a year.

Lu Zhou was able to use his own image to elevate the international mathematics community’s impression on Chinese mathematicians. This wasn’t something that could be done by an ordinary genius.

Just like Ramanujan, there would one day be a Lu Zhou Prize, which would be established to encourage young scholars to continue pursuing the path of mathematics.

However, even then, Academician Wang wasn’t happy having to bend over backward for a millennial!

Especially since Lu Zhou refused to work at Yan University, he could foresee a cohort of excellent Jin University students becoming academicians, overthrowing the Yan University empire...

What triggered him the most was that he still had to put on a polite face for this kid.

“Speaking of which, Academician Wang, you were also invited to the conference?”

“My field of research happens to be closely related to mathematical physics. I’m also an honorary director of the Chinese Physics Society, so they sent me an invitation. Speaking of which, you’re going to speak on stage, right? Are you ready?”

Lu Zhou smiled and replied, “I’m ready. Hopefully, I won’t embarrass the Chinese academic community...”

“Haha, you’re too humble!” Wang Shicheng smiled and politely said, “The conference is happening in three days. If you have time, why don’t you visit Yan University? Our mathematics department has idolized you for quite some time now. Those scholars would love for you to sit down at Yan University and teach them some things.”

“Yan University is an amazing university, what could I teach them?” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I don’t mind visiting, I just don’t want to disturb you guys.”

Academician Wang Shicheng smiled and said, “Professor Lu, you’re too humble. There isn’t a university in the world that would refuse your visit.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Okay, I’ll go tomorrow then. I’ll probably be busy after that.”

“No problem! Yan University’s doors are always open for you.” Academician Wang Shicheng smiled and said, “Okay then, you must be tired from traveling. I’ll see you tomorrow?”

“See you tomorrow.”

Lu Zhou took his luggage and walked toward the elevator.

903 The Third Half

The International Lunar Hadron Collider conference was going to happen in three days. Thus, Lu Zhou had three days of spare time.

However, Lu Zhou went from Jiangling to Jiangcheng, then from Jiangcheng to Beijing. He had had a long trip and felt a little tired.

After he put down his luggage at the hotel, he didn't have anything to do. After he took a bath, he began to quietly read his notebook, comparing it with Vera's thesis from time to time.

It was time for dinner, and he called the hotel and ordered room service. After he finished eating, he read the conference documents, took a shower, then quickly went to bed.

Lu Zhou woke up early the next day and called Wang Peng and asked to go to Yuanmingyuan Park.

Lu Zhou was about to go to Yanjing University, but he changed his mind at the last second and walked toward Shuimu University instead.

The security guard looked at his ID and politely let him in.

Lu Zhou walked along the tree-lined paths of Shuimu University and enjoyed the scenery. He experienced the rich academic atmosphere as he walked toward the west gate.

While walking next to a lake, he happened to run into two of his acquaintances.

These two were pretty big names.

They were leaders in the Chinese physics and mathematics community.

These two were none other than Mr. Qiu, the founder of geometric analysis, as well as Mr. Yang.

Lu Zhou wanted to say hello, but he overheard the two people discussing something. Therefore, he followed them and tried to listen in on the conversation.

"Mr. Yang, I don't agree with that. What do you mean a waste of money? How would you spend the money? In my opinion, this is the right place to spend money on."

"Pfft, what do you mean by the right place? Did you ask everyone's opinion?"

Mr. Yang suddenly noticed Lu Zhou walking nearby. He frowned and squinted at Lu Zhou.

“Academician Lu?”

Qiu Chengtong immediately turned his head around and saw Lu Zhou. He greeted him with a smile.

“Oh, Academician Lu! What a coincidence, what brings you here to Shuimu?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I’m here for a conference, so I just came here for a visit.”

“The International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference?” Old Qiu’s eyes lit up as he smiled and said, “What a coincidence, I was just talking with Mr. Yang about this. He won’t admit he’s wrong, how about you be the judge?”

I be the judge?

Why?

Lu Zhou wasn’t sure what to do.

Mr. Yang Chen Ning glanced at Qiu Chengtong.

“What do you mean to admit I’m wrong? I’m just talking facts and logic, how am I wrong?”

“Our country is still in the primary stage, barely going into the intermediate stage. Now is not the time for blind optimism.”

Qiu Chengtong unhappily said, “Old Yang, I don’t agree with that. The times have changed now. US\$20 billion is quite a big expense. But we don’t have to bear the entire cost of the project. Also, we’ll be able to attract thousands of outstanding international scientific researchers to work with us. We’ll be able to export our culture to the international academic community, and this is something money can’t buy!

“I recommend you to go to the conference. Don’t you want to see the day, where we can become the Switzerland of the physics world?”

“Oh, please, you’re a mathematician, why are you worrying about physicists,” Yang Chen Ning groaned and looked at Lu Zhou.

“Chief Designer Lu, what do you think?”

“Chief designer is just a role, and it sounds too serious. Please just call me Professor Lu.” Lu Zhou coughed and said, “As for my opinion... Mr. Qiu

already said it, now is not the time to save money. After all, if you want to make money, you have to spend it first.”

Mr. Yang stared at Lu Zhou, then turned toward the lake. After a while, he spoke.

“I wrote an article more than a decade ago. I still remember the title—China Should Not Build a Hadron Collider. Even though it’s been more than a decade, my opinion hasn’t changed. However, the steering wheel is in your hands. I don’t have anything else to say.”

Lu Zhou wanted to say something, but Mr. Yang continued, “I don’t want to criticize your opinion. Finding the solution to the Yang-Mills equations, linking the strong interaction and electromagnetic force... all these prove that you’re at the top of the theoretical physics field. Unless someone else can reveal the mystery behind the gravitational force... Which I don’t think is possible within this century.”

Mr. Yang looked away from the lake and stared at Lu Zhou.

“I’m almost 100 years old. I’m not as wise as I once was. I was rejected by PRL a while ago, which made me realize that I’m really getting old. Maybe it’s not a bad thing.”

“It seems like you know what you’re doing.”

Mr. Yang nodded at the woman in her forties, who was standing next to him. With the woman supporting his fragile body, he slowly walked away.

“This old guy...” Old Qiu shook his head and said, “Normally, he would argue with me for at least an hour or two.”

Even though the media constantly portrayed these two as being on opposite sides of the Hadron Collider construction, these two had a pretty good personal relationship. In fact, Old Qiu’s research on the Calabi–Yau manifold was a very important tool in mathematical physics. These two often communicated on academic matters.

That was one of the reasons the Qiu Chengtong mathematics research institute was built on the Shuimu University campus.

Lu Zhou: “Mr. Yang just cares about our nation’s future, and his concerns are not unreasonable.”

“Yeah, otherwise, I wouldn’t have debated with him for so long.” Qiu Chengtong nodded and smiled at Lu Zhou. “Speaking of which, US\$20 billion is not a small number. Can you handle this much pressure?”

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“Mr. Qiu, you’re mistaken.

“It’s only US\$20 billion.

“It’s my third time managing a project of this size.”

904 Mathematics Center in a Siheyuan

Suddenly, the atmosphere went silent.

The air remained quiet for a few seconds.

Old Qiu forcefully smiled, breaking the awkward atmosphere. He rubbed his nose and spoke.

“Oh, I nearly forgot... You’re not a kid anymore.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I’m glad you’re able to notice that. It means I haven’t wasted the past five years.”

“My brain can’t keep up with your speed of growth anymore...” Old Qiu sighed and began to reminisce about the past.

After a couple of seconds, he smiled and said, “Speaking of which, why are you at Shuimu University?”

“You might not believe me, but I happened to be walking nearby.”

Lu Zhou told Old Qiu about Academician Wang Shicheng’s invitation. The old man pushed his glasses and spoke with an unpleasant expression.

“Wang Shicheng... Don’t be fooled by his smile, who knows what’s behind that face. Don’t believe everything he says, this old man is up to no good! You should stay careful!”

Lu Zhou was a little confused.

“I’m just visiting the Yan University campus, what’s so bad about it...”

Qiu Chengtong said, "He's just up to no good! Visiting the Yan University campus is fine, but just stay careful!"

"Okay, okay."

Lu Zhou didn't have any grudges toward Academician Wang Shicheng, so he took the conversation elsewhere.

After some small talk, he bid farewell to Old Qiu and walked toward the west gate of Shuimu University, which was also toward the east gate of Yan University.

...

Yan University east gate.

A young teacher in a suit stood there.

When he noticed Lu Zhou, he instantly walked up and greeted him with a smile.

"You must be Academician Lu, right? Hello! Academician Wang told me you were coming."

Lu Zhou smiled at the enthusiastic teacher.

"I visited Shuimu University on the way, sorry to keep you waiting."

"Oh, no worries, you're a world-class scholar, I'm happy to wait here all night." The young professor reached out his hand and said, "Yang Yongan, mathematics professor. I'm in my thirties already, so I'm probably a bit older than you. Standing next to you makes me feel humbled."

"Oh, don't feel humbled, becoming a professor at Yan University is no small feat." Lu Zhou let go of Professor Yang's hand and said, "Where is Academician Wang?"

"Academician Wang is at the Yan University mathematics center. He has to train the national IMO team, so he's currently not available right now. My apologies."

IMO?

I totally forgot about that.

"It's fine, I understand..." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I want to go to the mathematics center, how about you take me there?"

Yang Yongan made an inviting gesture.

“This way.”

Beijing had changed quite a bit over the past few years. There were more and more Alternative Energy Vehicles on the road, more high-rise buildings, and more foreign residents. However, its historic architecture hadn't changed.

This kind of architecture could be found in artifacts and universities across Beijing.

Yan University was a world-class institute; the tree-lined paths connecting the teaching buildings gave off a rich academic atmosphere. This was one of the top academic research places in China.

Actually, Lu Zhou was familiar with Shuimu and Yan University's campuses.

When he used to live near Yuanmingyuan Park, he would often come here for a walk. However, due to various reasons, he was never able to visit the Yan University International Mathematical Research Center.

Apparently, the mathematics center was located inside a Siheyuan. It was only three stories tall and was filled with blackboards.

The rustic look of the facility was intentional. Apparently, being in a simple and pure environment activated the most primitive part of the human brain, thus enhancing their abilities to conduct scientific research.

Of course, being able to research in such a spacious Siheyuan that was located in the middle of Beijing was something most mathematicians dreamed of.

When Lu Zhou walked into the compound, he saw a young man sitting in front of a blackboard next to a big tree. The young man had a piece of chalk in his hand as he thought about the equations on the blackboard.

His gray clothes looked a little faded, and his hair looked a little unkempt.

This young man had a depressed-artist vibe. Lu Zhou looked at him and curiously asked, “Who is that?”

For some reason, Yang Yongan had an awkward look on his face.

It was almost as if Yang Yongan didn't want Lu Zhou to notice this man.

“Oh, don't worry about him... He's not normal.”

Not normal?

Lu Zhou was even more curious.

From his experience in Princeton, people that excelled in mathematics often had weird personality traits. For example, a former editor in chief of a mathematics journal never allowed people to sit in his office. Or for example, one of his students liked to drink mint coffee...

In fact, it was rare for a mathematics scholar to behave like a normal person.

“Why do you say that?”

“Oh, you know, at a place like this, we have various performance metrics. Like how many theses one publishes in a year, etc... However, some people like to be independent and some people don't care about the performance metrics.” Yang Yongan shrugged and said, “Most people stay away from people like him.”

Lu Zhou asked, “Then, has he produced any research?”

Yang Yongan stared at the young man and said coldly, “If he did, he wouldn't be so miserable.”

Lu Zhou was still curious. He ignored Professor Yang's words and walked up to the man.

Suddenly, he raised his eyebrows.

“Hyperelliptic curve analysis?”

The young “artist” finally noticed Lu Zhou.

He turned around and pushed his glasses.

“You understand?”

Before Lu Zhou could say anything, Yang Yongan spoke first.

“Bro, are you kidding, look at who this guy is.”

The young man stared at Lu Zhou for a while with a blank expression on his face.

“Who is it?”

Professor Yang was about to scold the young man, but Lu Zhou stopped him.

Lu Zhou didn't really care about being recognized. He merely stared at the blackboard and said, "The way you used the hyperelliptic curve analysis method is very interesting as most people don't use it this way."

The young man adjusted his glasses and looked at the blackboard.

"It's because I'm not researching Riemann's hypothesis... This method was originally invented to be used for Riemann's hypothesis."

"I agree..." Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Looking at your definition of a non-singular complex algebraic cluster... I'm guessing you're researching the Hodge conjecture?"

905 Who Are You?!

Yang Yongan was stunned.

The young man with glasses was also stunned.

Everyone went silent for a few seconds.

"... Hodge conjecture?"

Yang Yongan stared at the blackboard, then at the young man like he was a lunatic.

He always thought this guy was crazy.

He heard that ever since this guy joined the mathematics center, he had been working on some esoteric stuff and hadn't been able to produce any research results. The young man was even kicked out of his office.

Anyone else would have quit, but this guy was different. After being kicked out of his office, he brought his chair and blackboard into the courtyard and did his work here instead.

This young man didn't feel mistreated at all. When people asked him why he didn't leave, he just said that he liked the quietness here.

When Yang Yongan first joined the mathematics center, he thought that this guy was a secret genius. However, after some time went by, he stopped giving this guy the benefit of the doubt.

After all, this guy had been here for five years without producing any research results.

A mathematician only had ten or twenty years of golden research time. And this guy hadn't produced any research in five years. His time was running out.

But now that he heard this guy was researching one of the Millennium Prize Problems, he was certain that this guy was crazy.

The young man wasn't fazed as he looked at Lu Zhou and asked, "You... know what I'm researching?"

If this were a professor from the mathematics center, the young man wouldn't be surprised.

But this was the first time Lu Zhou saw what was on the blackboard. The young man was a little surprised.

After all, branches of mathematics were wildly different from one another. If a person in the partial differential equation field wanted to research complex topology, it would be no different than letting a physicist research organic chemistry.

Not to mention, even people doing research on the Hodge conjecture wouldn't be able to instantly recognize what was on the blackboard, because they would often have different research paths.

Furthermore, this was just an initial draft; it was barely related to the Hodge conjecture.

I guess this guy... is in the same research field as me!

The young man looked a little intrigued.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "It's not that difficult to see. Other than the Hodge conjecture, there are few algebraic topologies of non-singular complex algebraic clusters that produce these polynomial equations as subclusters. People outside of this field might not notice; after all, the more complex a question, the more esoteric it is."

"Yeah..." The young man looked a little emotional as he sighed and said, "I've been here for five years, no one has even talked with me about my research before."

“Maybe people know what you’re researching, but they just don’t want to talk with you.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Can I borrow your chalk?”

The young man handed out his chalk.

“Sure... but there’s not much space on the blackboard.”

“That’s fine...” Lu Zhou looked at Yang Yongan and said, “Professor Yang, could you please give me a blackboard...”

Yang Yongan instantly responded, “Okay! Just wait here, we have plenty of blackboards.”

He quickly found two noob researchers and dragged a blackboard next to the tree.

Lu Zhou smiled as a show of thanks and turned his attention to the empty blackboard. He went silent for a while and began writing.

[By the Lefschetz-Hyperplane theorem, $i: X^n(d) \rightarrow \mathbb{CP}^{n+r}$ is n equivalent, thus $X^n(d)$ and \mathbb{CP}^n have the same n ...]

...

Actually, the Hodge conjecture wasn’t Lu Zhou’s research field.

However, because of its connection with the Cauchy–Riemann equations, Lu Zhou was still familiar with the problem. Also, the young scholar’s novel application of the hyperelliptic curve analysis method gave Lu Zhou some inspiration.

Just like how Riemann’s hypothesis could form a bridge between algebra and geometry, the Hodge conjecture could bridge the gaps between topology and algebraic geometry.

Of course, he wasn’t trying to prove the Hodge conjecture.

After all, even Lu Zhou couldn’t prove a Millenium Prize Problem in such a short amount of time.

However, just like Riemann’s hypothesis, the Hodge conjecture had a lot of weak forms.

For example, for the case of H^2 , the Hodge conjecture would hold!

Lu Zhou was totally focused on his calculations. In the side building nearby, sixty people who were selected for the national IMO training had just finished

listening to Academician Wang Shicheng's speech, and they were currently on a short break.

A man in a baseball cap sitting by the window was reading through his book. Suddenly, a chubby kid sitting in front of him turned around and spoke.

"Brother Li, someone is showing off in the courtyard!"

"Not interested."

The chubby kid then said, "But he seems to be pretty nutty! I looked at the blackboard when I went to the toilet, but I couldn't even understand the things he wrote!"

The guy in the baseball cap was a little intrigued. He put down his book and glanced outside the window.

"Let's check it out then!"

...

More and more equations filled the blackboard.

More and more spectators stood in the courtyard.

Most of them were professors of the mathematics center that recognized Lu Zhou. Even though it was difficult for them to keep up with Lu Zhou's calculations, they still sat there, eagerly listening and taking notes.

There were also kids who were clearly high school students. They were all members of the IMO national training team—"mathematics geniuses"—from all over the country.

These kids stood there with a fascinated look on their faces as they watched the equations appear on the blackboard.

They wanted to do the same.

Sitting under a tree and writing equations about the universe; that was going to be their future!

The man in the baseball cap was stunned, and his shoulders began trembling.

The chubby kid standing next to him spoke.

"Brother Li, are you having a seizure?"

"Jesus! He's a god! I've seen him somewhere before..."

“Sure not, this is his first time at Yan University.”

“No, no, I remember him, let me think...”

After giving his speech, Academician Wang Shicheng went to his office to drink some tea. He then slowly walked to the courtyard with the intention to greet Academician Lu at the entrance. Little did he know, Academician Lu was already here, writing equations on the blackboard.

Wang Shicheng frowned; he walked up and tried to look at the blackboard.

His pupils dilated the second he saw the blackboard.

The Hodge conjecture.

Even though this wasn't his research area, for a veteran mathematics scholar like him, he could easily recognize what he was looking at.

He also noticed the “weirdo” standing next to Lu Zhou; the man who had been researching the Hodge conjecture for more than ten years—Chen Yang!

An hour went by.

The shadow of the tree slowly moved as the sun traveled across the sky.

Everyone remained perfectly silent.

That was until someone sighed and exclaimed.

“Hodge conjecture holds true for H^2 ... Amazing.”

Yang Yongan was spooked by the voice. When he turned around, he saw that Academician Wang Shicheng was standing right behind him.

“Oh, academician!”

“Shh, be quiet, don't disturb him.” Wang Shicheng pointed toward the blackboard and said, “He's almost finished.”

Yang Yongan quietly spoke.

“So you're saying he proved a weak form?”

“No, he's not the one that proved it.” Wang Shicheng shook his head and said, “If I recall correctly, this was proven by Lefschetz in the 1920s.”

He paused for a second and spoke.

“However, even though this isn’t a completely new result, he used a completely different method than Lefschetz!

“No one has ever solved the weak form Hodge conjecture like this.”

Yang Yongan was shocked.

An entirely different method!

He proved a weak form of a world-class problem just like this?!

In just an hour or two?!

So this is...

Academician Lu’s true strength?

He was becoming more and more surprised.

“No wonder he’s the top scholar of his generation...” Wang Shicheng sighed and said, “His strength in differential equations, complex analysis, and topology is unparalleled.”

But he’s not working in our mathematics center...

What a shame...

“Amazing... Classifying all manifolds for a given homotopy by using the hyperelliptic curve analysis...”

The young man’s voice was trembling as Lu Zhou finished writing.

He wasn’t just shocked.

He was also ecstatic!

“I’m Chen Yang, mathematics... associate professor.

“Who are you?”

He actually introduced himself to me?

For a “crazy” person, he’s quite polite.

Lu Zhou smiled and put down the half-used chalk.

“Jinling mathematics department.

“Lu Zhou.”

906 I“m Your Fan!

The atmosphere went silent for a few seconds.

Most of the spectators knew who Lu Zhou was; otherwise, they wouldn't have watched so carefully.

However, when Chen Yang heard the words "Lu Zhou", he was totally astonished.

Over the past few weeks, the hyperelliptic curve analysis method he studied, as well as all of its applications, even the source of his inspiration, was all from Lu Zhou's Annual Mathematics thesis.

He couldn't believe the author was standing in front of him.

"Lu Zhou?"

Chen Yang wasn't the only person who was astounded, the boy in the baseball cap reached out his right hand with his eyes wide open.

"Y-you are Lu Zhou? Academician Lu from Jinling?"

His chubby friend standing next to him tried to pull him back.

Lu Zhou felt like the guy in the baseball cap looked familiar.

Lu Zhou looked at him and smiled.

"Hey, have we met before?"

The guy in the baseball cap couldn't believe Lu Zhou recognized him. He spoke excitedly.

"Yeah! On the plane!"

Plane?

Lu Zhou had a look of realization on his face.

Oh, that kid.

The guy's face was bright red as he spoke with a stutter.

"M-my name is Li Mo. I'm your biggest fan!"

Lu Zhou: "..."

Fan?

Bullsh*t!

You didn't even know what I looked like, how are you a fan?

Do you think I'm dumb?

The guy in the baseball cap continued to blabber, "I've read about your group structure method in a number theory textbook. It also talked about you proving Goldbach's conjecture in the Princeton lecture hall... You're amazing!"

"Bro, bro, let's leave," the chubby guy said as he awkwardly tried to pull his friend away.

Unfortunately, Academician Lu already turned away, completely ignoring the enthusiastic guy in the cap.

The guy in the baseball cap felt embarrassed.

Wang Shicheng finally finished reading the equations on the blackboard. He calmed down and clapped his hands with a smile.

"Wow, sensational."

In fact, he didn't know which part was sensational. Even though he was also in the algebraic geometry field, knot theory and the Hodge conjecture were two different areas of research.

If this was a couple of decades ago, he might have been able to keep up with Lu Zhou's pace. But now, being able to comprehend Lu Zhou's calculations at all was already difficult.

"Academician Wang, you're too kind. It's nothing sensational, just a simple application of a mathematical tool."

Lu Zhou smiled and looked at Chen Yang as he said, "Your research is interesting. I've seen plenty of applications of the hyperelliptic curve analysis method on arXiv, but this is the first time I've seen someone improve it and use it to research nonsingular complex algebraic clusters and the polynomial equations that define the subclusters."

"Oh, you're too kind." Chen Yang lowered his head and said, "I'm ashamed to say I've done less in six weeks than you did in an hour."

Professor Yang Yongan couldn't help but say, "Of course, do you really think you can compare with Academician Lu?"

"Hey, don't say that. I've done a lot of research on the hyperelliptic curve analysis method, and after seeing Mr. Chen's calculations, I was inspired."

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yang and continued, "The best way to polish a mathematical tool is to try and apply it to a problem through trial and error."

"This research pathway can prove that Hodge's conjecture holds true for H^2 ; this at least shows that your idea has potential."

Chen Yang pushed his glasses and pondered for a moment before saying in a serious tone, "Do you have any good suggestions?"

"Read more, think more, try more..." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Mathematics requires talent. The deeper into research you go, you'll realize that there aren't any shortcuts. This is very similar to other disciplines; anything that looks spectacular is nothing but the result of countless trials and errors."

Professor Yang Yongan had a thoughtful expression on his face.

The guy in the baseball cap looked at the ground and repeated the words to himself, "Read more, think more, try more... countless trials and errors... Is that how mathematics is?"

Academician Wang Shicheng stood in the crowd as he nodded with satisfaction.

Even though Lu Zhou's advice was simple, very few people actually understood and applied it. It took Wang Shicheng ten years to realize this, and he spent the next ten years producing outstanding research in knot theory.

But today, when Lu Zhou took the words of wisdom right out of his mouth, Wang Shicheng couldn't help but feel admiration.

He really is the best...

Even though he felt like Lu Zhou's success was filled with luck, it seemed like luck didn't play as big of a role as he had thought.

Lu Zhou looked around and spoke.

"No one here seems to understand your research."

Chen Yang looked a little resentful as he nodded and replied, "I did choose an almost impossible research project."

"Not necessarily..." Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "It's too early to make that conclusion. In my opinion, you're far from being stuck at a bottleneck. Just judging from the things you wrote on the blackboard, it's obvious that your research ideas have potential. Even if you can't solve it in the end, you might be able to produce amazing in-progress results."

Although this guy's personality was a bit weird, his mathematical ability was strong. What he lacked was experience.

If this guy stays at the mathematics center, forever being ignored, he would never achieve anything.

Lu Zhou didn't care that Academician Wang Shicheng was standing right next to him, he reached out his hand and asked, "Have you thought about coming to Jinling?"

"I can guarantee that you'll find people to discuss your research with."

907 Poaching Players!

Coming to Jinling?

When Academician Wang Shicheng heard this, he almost spat out blood.

The person Lu Zhou was trying to poach used to be a nobody, so even if Chen Yang left the mathematics center, Wang Shicheng wouldn't care...

However, anyone that was being poached by Academician Lu wasn't just a "nobody".

Wang Shicheng knew that Academician Lu had an eye for talent.

After all, Wang Shicheng trusted Lu Zhou's judgment more than his own.

"Academician Lu," Wang Shicheng coughed and said, "that's... not the best idea, right? Professor Chen is the backbone of our young researchers at the Yan University International Mathematical Research Center. Poaching him directly in front of us is a bit inappropriate..."

"Is it?"

What's so inappropriate?

You guys don't want him anyway...

Lu Zhou frowned and said, "But I heard that... Professor Chen doesn't even have an office here? Since the mathematics center is clearly overcrowded, isn't it better for him to leave?"

Wang Shicheng had an awkward expression on his face.

"That's misconstrued! Mr. Chen is a respected associate professor, and we removed him from his office as a way to sharpen his mind."

Wang Shicheng looked at Chen Yang and said, "Chen Yang, I was planning on giving you a full professor role this year; I just didn't tell you yet. A full professor title from Yanjing University, think carefully."

However, Associate Professor Chen's answer shocked Academician Wang.

Either Chen Yang was sick of this place, or he just didn't care about his academic ranking title, but he pushed his glasses and spoke without hesitation.

"Sorry, Academician Wang, I've already made my decision.

"Thank you for the past five years, at least you didn't fire me.

"As for the title you mentioned, you should give it to someone else. I don't really care for it."

"You... !" Wang Shicheng's face turned bright red. He then sighed and said, "Okay then, since you've decided, do what you want."

Professor Yang Yongan stared at Academician Wang in disbelief; he didn't expect Academician Wang to compromise this easily.

The other scholars standing nearby also looked baffled. They didn't expect Academician Wang Shicheng to admit defeat this quickly.

Even though he's facing Academician Lu...

He should at least put up a fight, right?

Chen Yang looked at Lu Zhou and spoke.

"I want to go to Jinling."

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

“You’ll be welcomed there.”

...

Even though Academician Wang didn’t want his man to get poached, he didn’t want to offend Academician Lu either. Not to mention that Chen Yang himself wanted to leave.

Academician Wang Shicheng knew there was nothing else he could say. In the end, he said some fake words such as “best of luck in your future endeavors”.

As for Chen Yang, he didn’t really care about leaving the Yan University International Mathematical Research Center at all. After all, he hadn’t been treated fairly; he was even kicked out of his office.

He had lived in Beijing for his entire life, so he was hesitant about moving into a brand new city.

However, that was a small sacrifice.

Not to mention, if he wanted to visit his family, he could easily take the high-speed rail back to Beijing anytime.

After poaching a talented man in front of so many people, Lu Zhou didn’t want to stay in the Yan University International Mathematical Research Center any longer. He could feel that Academician Wang Shicheng no longer welcomed him.

After some small talk, Lu Zhou and Chen Yang quietly left the Siheyuan.

They walked on the tree-lined Yan University path while Lu Zhou briefly explained to him about the situation at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

“The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study doesn’t have any end of year performance metrics. You can concentrate on whatever research project you’d like, as long as you can prove that your project is meaningful. If there are any necessary expenses, you can apply for funding.

“Also, I might not be able to help you with the Hodge conjecture. After all, I have my own stuff to do. But when I’m not busy, you can come talk to me. I do have some experience in algebraic geometry.”

Chen Yang was walking with a large stack of draft paper and documents in his hand when he nodded and said, "Thank you, you're doing me a huge favor."

"You're welcome." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Speaking of which, you really don't recognize me?"

"Recognize?" Chen Yang thought for a second and said, "I do know of you, I saw your name in that Annual Mathematics thesis and some other theses. But I didn't know what you looked like..."

Lu Zhou coughed and asked, "When was the last time you went on the Internet?"

Chen Yang thought for a second and replied, "Five years ago. Ever since I went to the mathematics center, I barely went online... I didn't really need to. There's a lot of resources at the mathematics center, and I was able to find any resource I wanted."

Lu Zhou said, "You don't watch TV either?"

Chen Yang: "... There's a TV in the cafeteria, but I don't really watch it."

I see...

It's like this guy is living in the 19th century!

This type of person was common in Princeton, where a lot of the older professors didn't like to use the Internet. They would even ask their PhD students to help them book flights and academic conference tickets.

However, a Chinese scholar in his thirties that didn't go online was quite rare.

Lu Zhou coughed and said, "... I don't want to criticize your research habits, but the times have changed. The Internet simplified a lot of things. For example, arXiv is a goldmine. Even though the preprints are not peer-reviewed, there are a lot of sophisticated ideas on there."

"ArXiv?"

"No way, you don't even know what arXiv is?"

Chen Yang began to reflect on his research habits. He then said thoughtfully, "I'll check it out."

Even though this guy was a bit old-fashioned, he was still open to advice.

Lu Zhou nodded and didn't continue speaking on this topic.

He finally understood how a mathematician like Chen Yang didn't recognize him.

Five years ago, Lu Zhou was still in Princeton.

If Chen Yang never went online or followed the mathematical world's gossip, it made sense for him to not recognize Lu Zhou.

Just like that kid in the baseball cap, he was probably one of those genius students that never went online or watched TV, thus he wasn't able to recognize Lu Zhou either.

After all, the academic community was a relatively introverted circle; it wasn't like the entertainment industry at all, where everyone knew everyone.

"Speaking of which, I haven't talked about comp yet."

"Comp?" Chen Yang paused for a second and said, "I don't really care, just cover the cost of living... and the cost of the journal subscriptions."

Lu Zhou shook his head and smiled.

"I can't do that, that's not how we do things... You have a PhD, right?"

Chen Yang nodded.

"Yeah..."

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, "Since you were an associate professor in Beijing, your monthly salary will start from 10k RMB a month. Your accommodation and insurance will be covered. After you arrive in Jinling, you'll receive all of the specifics. I don't have any performance requirements for you, but the compensation is result-oriented. We're working on a total meritocracy basis. All I'm providing you is an environment for research."

After hearing Lu Zhou's words, Chen Yang nodded. He didn't focus on his compensation at all.

Instead, he said, "You're not going to Jinling with me?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I didn't come all the way to Beijing to poach you; I still have a meeting here. Just go to Jinling with my recommendation letter. You know how to take a taxi, right?"

Chen Yang nodded.

“I do know that.”

The two nearly arrived at the school gate.

Lu Zhou saw his black sedan parked nearby.

Suddenly, he heard someone shout from behind him.

“Academician Lu! Wait a second, Academician Lu!”

Lu Zhou turned around and saw the guy in the baseball cap running toward him.

As the guy stopped and began panting, Lu Zhou raised his eyebrows and calmly asked, “Hey, what do you want?”

The guy panted while patting his chest. He barely stood up straight as he replied, “Um, my name is Li Mo, a member of the national IMO training team. I’m sorry I didn’t recognize you. I’ve never seen your photo before, I’m really sorry... Um, can you be my mentor?”

Lu Zhou wanted to refuse, but seeing how eager the teenager was, he didn’t want to immediately reject him.

“Okay then, tell me, what are you good at?”

“Um,” the guy scratched his head and said, “my achievements aren’t even worthy of mentioning.”

Oh, so you’re aware of that?

Then why do you think I’ll be your mentor?

Lu Zhou smiled and was about to tease the kid.

However, the teenage boy spoke first.

“B-but, the training team coach told me what I was the only student who finished the hardest question on the winter training camp exam. He told me that if I wanted to continue in mathematics, I should go into the field of number theory or complex analysis. As far as I’m concerned, you’re the strongest scholar in number theory!”

Lu Zhou paused for a second before asking, “Wait a second, you were the only one that solved that question?”

“Yeah!” the guy said with a proud look on his face. He then smiled and added, “The teacher talked crap about the person that came up with such a hard question for high school students. Apparently, the teachers who marked the question complained about how the Riemann zeta function was outside of the curriculum! Of course, a competition has no curriculum...”

This Li Mo was clearly a rambler.

Lu Zhou didn't fully listen to his words at all. Instead, he had an awkward look on his face.

Wasn't I the one... who came up with this question...

But is it really that hard?

Only one person solved it?

Really?

Lu Zhou thought that he clearly chose an easy question and that it could be solved with high school mathematics knowledge. It was just that the steps would be a little cumbersome.

Lu Zhou stared at Li Mo and coughed.

“Don't get cocky, that question isn't difficult.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second then continued, “I admit you're talented in mathematics, but you can't be too proud.

“Since you know who I am, you know my background. Being my student isn't that easy.”

“I know! You're super amazing!” the guy said with a twinkle in his eyes. “Tell me, what do I have to do, to have you teach me mathematics?”

Lu Zhou could tell that the guy wasn't thirsty for fame or fortune, and he was doing this purely for the love of mathematics. Lu Zhou contemplated for a second and spoke.

“Easy, win an IMO gold medal and then we'll talk.”

After that, he and Chen Yang walked out of the school gate.

908 Stepped on Treasure!

When Li Mo returned to the mathematics center, the sun was beginning to set.

He was about to pack his things and go back to his apartment.

“Brother Li, how come you disappeared? I tried looking for you. We already finished dinner.”

Li Mo shook his head.

“It’s fine, I’ll go get some food later. There are a lot of restaurants nearby.”

He grabbed his backpack and was about to leave, but the chubby guy grabbed his shoulder.

“Wait a second, where did you go?”

Li Mo paused for a second and spoke.

“Oh, I went to find Academician Lu.”

“Find Academician Lu? What happened?”

“I asked him to be my mentor, I want him to teach me mathematics!”

Meng Fei was a little confused.

“... And he agreed?”

Li Mo shook his head.

“Nope.”

“I told you.” Meng Fei shook his head and said, “He’s an academician, a rocket scientist, why would he teach a high school student?”

Li Mo nodded and said, “But...”

Meng Fei paused for a second and asked, “But what?”

The guy in the baseball cap clenched his fist and said, “But he promised me that, if I won an IMO gold medal, he would accept me as his student.”

An IMO gold medal.

Sounded challenging.

However, it was possible.

After all, he was the only person who solved the last question of the national IMO training exam!

Meng Fei wasn't excited at all; he looked at Li Mo like he was a dumb*ss.

Li Mo didn't know why his friend looked dissatisfied.

"Why are you looking at me like that? You don't think I can do it?"

"No," Meng Fei shook his head and said, "Brother Li, if you do win a gold medal, instead of going to Shuimu University or Yan University, you decide to go to Jin Ling University... Wouldn't your father kill you?"

Even though Academician Lu was a top scholar, Jin Ling University was no match compared to Shuimu University or Yan University. Even though the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had made great scientific research achievements in recent years, the reputation and academic prestige were nowhere near that of Shuimu University or Yan Universities'.

Anyone getting into Shuimu University or Yan University would be envied by all of their neighbors, but getting into Jin Ling University wasn't the same...

However, after hearing the chubby guy's words, Li Mo confidently shook his head.

"Not afraid at all, what is there to be afraid of? I have already decided! Academician Lu wouldn't lie to me. If I get the gold medal, he's going to be my teacher!"

"Then get ready for an as* beating from your dad! Okay, I won't persuade you..." Meng Fei shook his head and patted his buddy on the shoulder. "I'll support you wherever you go."

Li Mo looked at his chubby friend and spoke.

"Good!"

"Hey, but then again, if I were the one to win a gold medal and decide to go to Jin Ling University instead... I would be scared sh*tless of my dad..."

Li Mo looked at his friend and sighed.

"Don't worry, you won't win a medal."

Meng Fei: "Why do you have to do that..."

Li Mo smiled and patted him on the shoulder.

“Just kidding, come, let’s get food.”

“I just ate... Whatever, I’ll come anyway.”

...

Lu Zhou didn’t know that he had already planted a seed inside a certain teenager.

After Lu Zhou left Yan University’s campus, he got in his car and called his office. He asked his assistant Zhao Huan to buy a plane ticket for his newly poached “talent”.

He didn’t come all the way to Beijing to poach a talent; he had more important things to do.

After Lu Zhou got in the car, he called the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and told them about the new hire.

After returning to the hotel, Lu Zhou received the conference summary from the Lunar Orbit Committee and briefly looked at his obligations.

As a chief designer, in addition to giving a speech at the opening ceremony, he was also the face of the entire project.

As for the other troublesome matters, such as negotiating with diplomats from other countries, those were handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They had been preparing for the past two months for this event.

While Lu Zhou was on his New Year’s holiday, these people were working around the clock.

Lu Zhou glanced at the meeting summary and tossed it aside. Lu Zhou took out his notebook and wrote down the things written on the blackboard this afternoon.

Even though his research wasn’t on the Hodge conjecture, he still learned a lot from Chen Yang’s calculations.

For example, the method Chen Yang used when defining the topological invariants of the cohomology class described the basic features of a complex manifold. This gave Lu Zhou a new idea for the application of the Étale cohomology group.

Even though this idea wasn't particularly clever, it was novel enough that Lu Zhou was surprised to see this being invented by a guy closed off to the rest of the world.

Maybe after five years of intensive research, Chen Yang has a deep understanding of algebraic geometry.

He's just lacking in mathematical tools and experience.

This was one of the main reasons Lu Zhou wanted to poach him. Lu Zhou believed he had the resources to make Chen Yang flourish.

With a pen in his hand, Lu Zhou stared at the lines of calculations in the notebook. He muttered to himself, "Bridging the gap between complex manifolds and topology, finding answers in higher dimensions... This guy is a genius."

The problem in its high-dimensional case was easier than the low-dimensional case. This sounded a little weird, but there was a reason behind it. Similarly, in the 1960s, Professor Smale came up with a genius idea, which was that the Poincaré conjecture in its high-dimensional case was easier than its three-dimensional case.

Smale used his genius idea to finally prove the Poincaré conjecture in its five-dimensional space and above, thus winning a Fields Medal.

"I didn't expect the hyperelliptic curve analysis method to be applied like this. I guess my mathematical tool is more powerful than I had thought.

"It seems like I have stepped on a treasure."

The more Lu Zhou dived into these formulas, the more his eyes began to shine.

For some reason, Lu Zhou felt like he just took another big step forward toward solving Riemann's hypothesis.

"I wonder if Vera has finished writing her thesis yet."

Lu Zhou had this urge to publish a thesis. He opened his computer and searched in the literature database. He then checked whether or not his students had recently published any papers.

After all, the things that Vera sent him were unpublished work. He couldn't use them without referencing Vera.

It was common for scholars to wait for their colleagues to publish before publishing their own theses.

Of course, there were also scholars who were not as nice as Lu Zhou.

Unfortunately, after searching the database, Lu Zhou didn't find any theses published by Vera.

I guess she either hasn't submitted it, or it's still in peer review.

"Why hasn't she published yet?"

Lu Zhou closed the literature database software and opened Xiao Ai's custom thesis writing software.

He still had to write a thesis; however, he couldn't publish in a journal yet.

"I guess... I'll upload a preprint first."

909 Grand Meeting of Physics and Aerospace

Three days later, Beijing had a cloudless, sunny day.

It was rare for this city to have such good weather.

Thousands of people gathered at the Beijing Conference Center.

Two security guards stood at the conference hall entrance with a formal smile on their faces.

Their faces became sore after a while. They spoke to each other in hopes of relaxing their facial muscles.

The guard with a buzz cut said, "I realized that no matter what the conference is, if it has an 'international' in its name, it becomes totally different."

The other slightly older guard asked, "What do you mean?"

The younger guard continued, "Think about it, if they changed it to just the China Lunar Hadron Collider Conference, wouldn't it feel less important?"

The older guard smiled and said, "Why does it matter? The word international only means that we're open to cooperation from other countries. What does this have to do with importance?"

“I guess you’re right.”

“Okay, enough, stop messing around, be quiet.”

On the other side of the conference center, a young PhD student with neatly combed hair looked at the foreign faces walking through the entrance.

“Hey, if we can build this Hadron Collider ourselves, why are we letting the Americans participate? Can’t we just do it ourselves?”

The older man standing next to him was probably his supervisor.

After hearing his student’s words, the older man in a suit shook his head and spoke.

“That’s not how it works. We’re going through globalization; cooperating with other countries is a win-win situation. We’re still the world-leaders in the aerospace industry, and the best way to maintain our advantage isn’t to close our borders. Rather, we should join forces; even the Americans know this.”

The younger scholar scratched his head.

“So what’s the advantage of joining forces?”

The older man coughed and said, “Actually, I’m not sure, I heard this from someone at the hotel buffet yesterday.”

Student: “...”

The older man coughed and continued, “All in all, your plan won’t work. Hosting this international event strengthens our diplomatic relationships with other countries. Back in the day, we used to work for western laboratories, helping them do research. Now, these foreigners will work for us.

“This meeting is very important. Don’t sit there on your phone, try to network with people. The person sitting next to you could be a laboratory director or some big-name physicist.”

The young student had a serious look on his face as he nodded and turned off his phone.

“Understood!”

The older man smirked at his student.

Not a bad student.

Even though the older man was a leader in physics among top Chinese universities, he was still humbled at a place like this.

Being able to network at an international physics event like this was beneficial for everyone, even him.

Speaking of which, he had to thank Academician Lu for creating this opportunity for the Chinese physics community to host an event like this.

If only he had this kind of opportunity when he was younger. Back in his day, not only did he not have foreigners coming to China for an academic conference, he could barely go to a conference himself...

The old man couldn't help but look at his student with envy in his eyes.

Kid, you don't know how lucky you are.

You're in the perfect era for physics...

...

The first International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference was held in the Beijing Conference Center.

Professor Keriber stood at the entrance of the conference hall with a large trench coat over his shoulders as he welcomed Lu Zhou with his arms wide open.

"Hi, my friend, long time no see!"

"Long time no see." Lu Zhou hugged the tall and thin German professor and smiled. He said, "If I recall correctly, this is the Lunar Hadron Collider Conference, so what are you doing here?"

Professor Keriber, director of the Wendelstein 7-X Stellarator Institute, was one of the main engineers working on controllable fusion research in Europe.

When China was leaving ITER, these two were competitors, but they had always maintained a good personal relationship. They even did some academic exchanges on behalf of their respective countries.

For example, the STAR Stellarator, predecessor of the Pangu fusion reactor, was modified from the Wega Stellarator bought from Germany.

Looking at it from the long term perspective, the deal certainly worked out for Germany. Without the success of the Pangu fusion reactor, Europe would

have had to wait another fifty years to use clean and nearly unlimited energy. Now that the fusion negotiations had ended, it was likely for East Asia Energy to build fusion reactor plants in France or Germany sometime in the next year...

"You probably forgot that I'm an engineer doing research on plasma physics, and I'm one of the world's leading experts on superconducting magnets. I take credit in CERN's underground superconducting magnets. That's why I received an invite." Keriber patted Lu Zhou's shoulder and said, "You have another friend here as well."

"Professor Klitzing?" Lu Zhou looked at the old man nearby and smiled. "I didn't expect to see you here."

"How could I miss such an important event? You guys will be the deciding factor on whether there will be new physics discoveries in the next fifty years." Professor Klitzing smiled and shook Lu Zhou's hand as he said,

"Congratulations on being able to host such an important meeting, this will be a highlight in your academic career... But I guess you don't care about those kinds of things anymore."

"Oh no, of course I care, but I'm not the one hosting this conference; I'm just one of the hosts..." Lu Zhou smiled and made an inviting gesture. "Let's go inside."

Professor Keriber suddenly raised his right hand.

"Wait a second, I forgot something."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "What thing? Don't tell me you left your invitation letter back at the hotel?"

"An old friend of mine from Princeton asked me to give you a letter. I knew that I would probably run into you, so I agreed." Keriber took out a letter from his briefcase and said, "This is it."

Lu Zhou was about to take this letter, but Wang Peng stepped forward and grabbed it.

"Sorry, can I take a look at it first?"

Keriber shrugged and awkwardly looked at Wang Peng. "Uh, sure, no problem, my job is just to deliver it. You can throw it in the trash for all I care..."

But I did go through airport security with it, so it should be fine, right? Just don't blame me."

"Yeah, we're in a special time right now, and it's kind of affecting my life..." Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and said, "Is it fine?"

After checking the envelope with professional tools, Wang Peng cautiously nodded.

"It's fine."

Wang Peng then walked to the side and opened the envelope.

There was a letter inside, as well as an invitation card.

Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and asked, "Can you tell me who sent the letter? I'm curious."

"The sender is Krugman... That's what it says." Wang Peng noticed Lu Zhou's face and asked, "What?"

Lu Zhou: "... Nothing."

F*ck sake!

He's still not giving up!

Even asked his friend to send me the letter...

Really can't get rid of him.

—

910 Let's All Prosper!

[Dear Professor Lu, I apologize for interrupting your busy schedule!

[I know that before you've finished reading this letter, you're already planning on rejecting me. I beg you not to make a decision yet.

[Solving the problem of social resource allocation has always been one of the most important propositions in economics. The 21st century of computers and mathematics opened a new door for our research. However, it is rare for scholars from other disciplines to take an interest in economics. It's very rare

to see great scholars like John Nash who were willing to venture into economics!

[I've tried to study these equations in the past, but unfortunately, due to my age, things aren't the same as before anymore.

[I know you're not interested in helping, probably tired of hearing from me. However, I'm still grateful that you're reading my letter.

[In two weeks, there will be an international macroeconomics conference in Shanghai. If you have time, it'd be great for you to come.

[I want to talk to you in person, and for you to see the impact your research has made.

[I look forward to meeting you!]

Is this guy stalking me?

He really never gives up, he should just be a salesman.

Lu Zhou was sitting in the conference hall lounge. He was in his suit, sitting in his chair with his makeup being done as he read the letter.

"Um... can you hurry up?"

For a guy like him, putting on makeup was torture.

Sitting in front of the mirror with someone else fiddling his face...

The young lady knew Lu Zhou would say this, so she put on a professional smile and spoke softly.

"Please be patient, Academician Lu, we're almost done."

F*ck, almost?

Lu Zhou wasn't happy to wait any longer.

"I think I'm handsome enough, this will do."

The young lady snorted and nearly dropped her eyebrow pencil.

"Y-you're kidding...? Of course, you're handsome, but for a formal occasion like this, you have to follow proper grooming and makeup standards."

Lu Zhou didn't want to argue with the lady, so he quietly muttered, "I never put on makeup for conferences."

“This isn’t an academic conference,” Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense said. He smiled and walked over. “Academician Lu, you’re the face of our country, so we have to make you look presentable.”

Lu Zhou looked at the old man walking through the door and spoke.

“You put on makeup as well?”

Director Li smiled.

“A little bit.”

Lu Zhou frowned and stared for a while.

“How come I can’t see it?”

“Just covered up some wrinkles... I’m getting old, it’s not the same anymore.” Director Li cleared his throat and put on a more serious expression. “Are you ready? You’re the first to speak.”

Lu Zhou adjusted his tie and smiled.

“I’ll be fine, I’m used to it by now, and it’s not like this is the United Nations.”

“You want to attend their conference? I can try.”

“It’s fine... I was just kidding.”

Lu Zhou wasn’t interested in the United Nations’ conferences.

He wasn’t a politician anyway.

What was the point of going there just to show his face?

“Okay.” The makeup lady put down her pencil and took a step back as she smiled and said, “Academician Lu, you look great; do you want me to take a photo?”

“No, it’s fine.” Lu Zhou looked at his watch and said, “I think I look better without makeup.”

Makeup lady: “...”

...

There was a huge crowd in the conference center.

Physicists, aerospace engineers, and high-level politicians from all over the world were sitting in this hall.

There were also young students that were abandoned by their supervisors and were trying to fit in.

There was still ten minutes before the opening ceremony, so people took this opportunity to gossip with one another.

“Guess who I saw when I walked in?”

“Who?”

“NASA Director Carson!”

“No way, Director Carson is here?”

“I’m 100% certain it’s him!”

“I can’t believe it... Looks like it’s not just the physics community, the aerospace industry will also be affected.”

“Are you living in the 18th century?”

“... What do you mean?”

“How do you not know the aerospace industry is going to be affected?”

Suddenly, the stage lights turned on.

People stopped talking and looked toward the stage.

The chattering gradually subsided.

Lu Zhou walked on stage in a suit.

He adjusted the microphone and spoke in a clear voice.

“Hello, everyone, I’m glad to see you here.”

A lot of people looked curiously at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou raised his voice and continued, “Seeing you all here means we have reached somewhat a consensus on many issues, so that’s a great thing.

“This is one of the rare conferences that doesn’t contain any academic content.

“I believe that politics, economics, culture, and scientific research are all connected. We’re all from different fields, different professions, different countries, but we’re here for one reason...”

Lu Zhou looked around the quiet venue and slowly spoke.

“That is to tackle the future issues together.”

His speech was almost over.

The opening ceremony was only two and a half minutes long.

Now that the opening words were over, it was time for Lu Zhou to deliver the real content of his speech.

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and looked at the notes in his hand. He then said in a steady and calm voice, “On behalf of the Chinese academic community, we would like to present to the world the Lunar Hadron Collider project vision.

“I hope we will all prosper together.”

The venue erupted in thunderous applause.

Lu Zhou gave a slight bow and walked off the stage.

911 A New Chapter in Physics!

The applause was like a thunderstorm that completely covered the entire auditorium.

Professor Klitzing, who was sitting in the center of the venue, clapped his hands and spoke to Professor Keriber.

“Excellent speech... What do you think?”

Professor Keriber smiled and responded, “I agree, but I think there’s something else that’s more incredible.”

Klitzing tilted his head and curiously looked at Keriber.

“Incredible? What?”

“I always thought that he is a scholar who focuses on his own research and doesn’t care about the rest of the world; I didn’t expect him to be like this.

“I once tried to ask for him to give us an opportunity.”

“What kind of opportunity?”

“The opportunity to work together, to share peace and prosperity.” Keriber’s eyes narrowed as he looked at Lu Zhou walking down from the stage. He said, “When he rejected me, I thought that he was pessimistic about the future... It turns out I was wrong.”

For any country on Earth, energy would always be a problem. Once the production and distribution of energy problems were solved, any other problems would eventually solve itself.

Cheap and accessible energy would have enormous impacts on society, bringing with it changes that would surpass the previous industrial revolutions.

On the other hand, the invention of this kind of cheap energy would disrupt the world in a violent way, breaking the peaceful international political state.

The reactions of various countries to this technology were more difficult to predict than the chaotic plasma turbulences.

One careless mistake or misjudgment could lead to unthinkable consequences...

Klitzing smiled and asked, “Are you talking about controllable nuclear fusion?”

As a scholar, he didn’t really care about political interests. He said nonchalantly, “I heard the EU and the United States paid a lot of money to buy nuclear cores from China... Wasn’t that how the situation panned out?”

Keriber shook his head and explained, “Klitzing, countries are made up of people, and every voice plays a certain role. The only difference is that some people’s voices are small and insignificant, like mosquitoes, while other people’s voices are as loud as thunder.

“Lu Zhou is the leader of China’s academic community, and he represents all Chinese scholars. He’s even the chief designer of the controllable fusion project. I am certain that he is partly the reason why the nuclear fusion negotiations have been going so peacefully.”

On the other hand, at the other side of the venue.

As Professor Frank Wilczek watched Lu Zhou walk off stage, he suddenly mumbled, “Tackle future issues together.”

Edward Witten, who was sitting next to him, curiously asked, “What do you mean?”

“What he just said... ” Wilczek continued, “This conference, as well as the soon to be established International Lunar Hadron Collider Research Center, allows us to tackle important issues together.”

Witten: “... Is that what he meant?”

“Probably...” Wilczek yawned and said, “Speaking of which, there’s finally someone willing to push our field forward... Are you ready, Mr. Witten?”

“Why are you asking me?”

“Why not?” Wilczek said, “You’ve always complained that the collider at CERN is too weak, that there’s no way to verify your theory. There’s going to be a much larger collider soon, and you’re pretty good friends with the person in charge.”

Witten shook his head.

“This is an important moment for physics, but it’s way too early to think about string theory.”

“Don’t be so pessimistic.”

“I’m not being pessimistic. We don’t have any way to observe string theory, and we can’t just use a collider to reveal the mystery of another dimension...” Witten continued, “However, this is still an important project, both academically and non-academically.”

“You mean outside of physics?” Wilczek frowned and said, “I don’t understand.”

Witten smiled.

“My intuition tells me that the entire world working on this project will push the field of physics forward... But it’s too early to speculate, so let’s wait and see what happens.”

Wilczek said, “Let’s wait? We won’t be here too much longer.”

Witten smiled.

“Who cares if we see it with our own eyes; Princeton will see it for us!”

...

After Lu Zhou got off stage, Mrs. Cramer, chairman of CERN, walked onto the stage.

This old grandma slowly expressed her support for the upcoming Lunar Hadron Collider (ILHCRC).

Due to various reasons, the academic community representatives were set to speak before the political representatives.

After Lu Zhou and CERN, who were both from the academic world, expressed their opinions, Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense spoke next. Then, various high-level officials from Russia, the United States, the European Union, and other countries also expressed their opinions of the project.

Regardless of what their intentions were, at this moment, in this venue, the world was working together on the project of the century.

This historic scene was recorded by various cameras on both sides of the venue and was being broadcast to millions of viewers in front of their TVs.

The opening ceremony soon ended.

The first Lunar Hadron Collider Conference was about to begin.

The world of physics was about to enter a new chapter...

912 He Will Definitely Come!

While the Lunar Hadron Collider Conference was happening, two professors on the other side of the world were sitting on the first-floor cafeteria at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study.

A TV in the cafeteria was showing the Columbia TV news report on the International Lunar Hadron Collider.

This story had been going around since last month.

The Moon was a piece of treasure that hung above everyone's head, and even though various grand plans had been announced, none of them had been put into action.

However, the Lunar Orbit Committee was an exception.

Ever since the Moon Palace project, the world had gotten to witness China's aerospace engineering feats.

It seemed like once the Chinese set their minds to do something, they were unstoppable.

Now that they were planning on building a hadron collider on the Moon, physicists from all over the world wanted to work for them; they were even willing to learn Mandarin...

The entire Internet was talking about this.

Not just the Internet, but in real life as well.

People had been talking about this on Princeton campus for quite some time now.

Almost every physicist was excited at the prospects behind China's crazy project.

The impact of this hadron collider project even spread to other fields.

According to Professor Krugman, there was even a well-known big-name economist who wrote a paper on the impact of the Lunar Hadron Collider on international relations and global trade patterns.

Even though Krugman often overheard physicists talking about god knows that, this was the first time he felt physics truly affecting his own life.

Professor Angus Deaton from the Princeton economics department, who was also a Nobel Prize laureate, suddenly spoke while looking at the TV.

"Are you sure he will go?"

Professor Krugman shrugged and said, "I'm not sure, but his research is very important. I have to give it a try."

"I think you're wasting your time."

Professor Angus shook his head and said, "Those pure mathematicians have a bias against economics. They have this idea that mathematics is something pure and noble, and it shouldn't be influenced by other disciplines. Do you know how hard it is to ask Deligne for help? When it comes to mathematics problems, he..."

Professor Angus put on an impatient face and shrugged.

"... This is the face he gives me."

Professor Krugman's mouth twitched as he tried to conceal his laughter.

"I understand what you're saying, but Professor Lu is different. He's won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and he's made great contributions to computational materials science. And his theory on the electrostrong interaction... Do you really think he's a pure mathematics researcher? No! He is open-minded; he's just not interested in physics."

Professor Angus sighed and lifted the cup.

"Yeah, he's not interested in economics. How do you plan on arousing his interest?"

Professor Krugman smiled and said confidently, "My dear Professor Angus Deaton, have you chased after girls before?"

Professor Angus frowned and said, "I did when I was younger... Why?"

Krugman: "You can't just make someone be interested immediately; you have to build a friendly relationship with them step by step. They will then naturally make a choice that benefits you."

Professor Angus opened his mouth and spoke.

"Interesting... But I still think your plan is going to fail."

"Why?"

"Because Professor Lu doesn't care about international affairs, and he doesn't care about your ideas at all. Haven't you noticed? Even though he tackles many problems outside of mathematics, all of the problems are chosen by himself."

"If he's really interested in economics, he would have already done the research by now. Obviously, he has the ability to do so, but he just doesn't care."

Professor Krugman still didn't seem to be convinced.

"Not necessarily, whether you're interested in international affairs and personally intervening in international affairs are two different things."

While the two were speaking.

The TV began to show a live stream of the International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference.

Lu Zhou stood on stage while speaking in a clear and solemn voice.

As Professor Krugman watched Lu Zhou giving the speech, his pupils expanded.

He then excitedly slammed his fist on the table.

“See! I told you! He cares about things outside of academia!”

“Do you want to make a bet? Angus!”

Professor Angus looked at his excited friend and asked, “Bet on what?”

Professor Krugman rubbed his hands and spoke.

“I bet he will come to the economics conference in Shanghai, and I’ll be able to persuade him to join in on my research project. Let me think... How does US\$10 sound?”

10?

Angus nearly laughed out loud.

Even though he would gladly steal Krugman’s money, the amount was too small.

He wanted to bet more chips.

“10 dollars is way too little. If you’re so certain, let’s bet 10 golden chocolates at the Stockholm Blue Hall dinner.”

“Damnnit, you want to empty my pockets...”

Professor Krugman paused for a while and finally clenched his jaws.

“Deal!”

913 Useless Banque

This was Lu Zhou’s busiest day of the year...

And the day had only just begun.

The moment he stepped off the podium, he was already being chased by reporters. This was followed by endless interviews, which were full of boring questions.

After getting rid of the reporters, Lu Zhou spent 10 minutes eating his lunch. After that, the secretary of the Lunar Orbit Committee placed a printed schedule in front of his face.

Just like he expected, his afternoon was fully packed, down to the minute. There wasn't a single minute of free time for him.

This cast a sharp contrast between today's busy schedule and Lu Zhou's past two days of leisure, and he felt a little overwhelmed.

After the busy day was over, Lu Zhou thought he could go ahead and get a good night's sleep. However, Director Li found him and told him about the dinner.

As the chief designer of the Lunar Orbit Committee, he had to attend the dinner...

"I know you're tired; we all are, and I haven't even eaten lunch yet."

"For a US\$20 billion project, you should just come. You don't even have to do anything, just stand there like a mascot, just let people know that you're the chief designer of the Lunar Orbit Committee!"

Lu Zhou wasn't persuaded by Director Li's words...

But US\$20 billion...

That was more than his net worth.

Because of how much money was involved, Lu Zhou decided to go...

...

The dinner was also at the Beijing Conference Center, but the location was changed from the auditorium to the Golden Hall, which was dedicated to hosting state-level banquets.

In comparison to the opening ceremony in the morning, which was open to all attendees, this dinner was only reserved for special guests with a golden invitation letter.

As for the other guests, their dinners were arranged at their respective hotels.

Actually, when it came to the dining experience, the hotel actually had better food. Not only was it a buffet, but it also had a greater variety of dishes.

On the other hand, other than the unlimited supply of red wine, the food at the Golden Hall came in tiny amounts on giant plates, which were swapped frequently. If someone was too busy networking with others, they wouldn't even have time to eat.

However, other than Lu Zhou, everyone was happy to eat in the Golden Hall.

After all, no one came to an international conference just for the food.

The people in the Golden Hall were Nobel Prize nominees, high-ranking officials, and various politicians and executives from the aerospace industry.

Networking with someone at this dinner would be more beneficial than attending any academic conference dinner.

Of course, that was for people who were trying to climb the political and academic ladder.

For the people who were at the top of the ladder, this banquet was useless.

After Lu Zhou entered the banquet hall, he greeted some of his friends and then immediately went to sit down at the white-cloth covered long tables.

The carefully arranged food and wine were placed on the tables.

Lu Zhou didn't eat a lot for lunch, so right now, all of his attention was on the food in front of him. He happily began eating.

Even though the food wasn't delicious, the presentation was sophisticated.

There was even a trolley on the side where the chef would cut up roast duck.

Lu Zhou loved the crispy and tender roasted duck. He wrapped it with some cucumbers and green onions, then added some sweet bean sauce; the contrast between the saltiness and sweetness was amazing.

While Lu Zhou's tastebuds were in heaven, two well-dressed Russian men approached him.

"Hello, Academician Lu, I am Novak, Minister of the Department of Energy," the cleanly shaved Russian said. He reached out his hand and said, "It's nice to meet you."

Lu Zhou looked at him and said, "Hello, Mr. Novak... You're here as well?"

Lu Zhou was a little confused about why the Russian energy minister was here.

Novak saw Lu Zhou's confused face and said, "I came here to attend a controllable fusion energy summit, and when I heard that you're attending this banquet, I decided to attend as well."

Lu Zhou reluctantly watched the chef push the roasted ducky trolley away and spoke.

"Oh, you didn't have to come all the way here to find me."

"It's fine, I hope I'm not disturbing you."

Lu Zhou wanted to tell Novak that he was disturbing his dinner, but he restrained himself.

Novak reached out his hand and introduced the Russian standing next to him.

"This is Academician Sivali, chief engineer of Rosatom."

This man was a little older, but he looked competent. He enthusiastically reached out his calloused hand.

"Hello, Academician Lu! I've heard many things about you."

"Hello..." Lu Zhou politely shook Academician Sivali's hand.

Even though he didn't recognize Sivali, he had heard about Rosatom before. This Russian nuclear industry giant was one of the world's leading nuclear fuel production companies. They controlled most of the uranium mines in Siberia, and they had their hands in various branches of the nuclear industry.

They worked with more than 904 Russian nuclear energy equipment manufacturers, 540 nuclear energy service agencies, 39 nuclear material and radioactive waste storage sites, 75 research institutes, etc.

After the controllable fusion negotiation, Rosatom, the head of the Russian nuclear industry, signed orders with East Asia Energy on behalf of Russia, thus obtaining the first controllable fusion reactor outside of China.

That reactor was placed in St Petersburg, with the China National Nuclear Corporation helping with supporting facilities.

Academician Sivali was the chief engineer of Rosatom; hence, he was a huge academic leader in Russia.

At least in the nuclear engineering field.

However, what confused Lu Zhou was that he heard Russians were very irritable and arrogant, especially Russian scholars. He thought they were extremely disagreeable.

For example, the famous Russian mathematician Kolmogorov was known for publically arguing with his own supervisor at mathematics conferences.

However, that wasn't the impression Lu Zhou had of Academician Sivali at all.

Academician Sivali was calm as a cucumber, almost a little timid.

"... I've read your paper on plasma turbulence, and it opened a door to an entirely new world for me. I can't believe someone came up with such a clever design, emitting a He3 particle into the chaotic plasma and analyzing the state of the chaotic system... You have no idea how shocked I was when I read your paper."

Academician Sivali was still holding Lu Zhou's hand.

Fortunately, Minister Novak could tell Lu Zhou was uncomfortable, so he coughed and interrupted Academician Sivali.

"Okay, Sivali, we're not here to talk about academia since that can be discussed at another time."

This old Russian let go of his hand and awkwardly scratched his head.

"Oh, sorry, I was too excited."

Lu Zhou nodded with a polite smile.

"It's fine."

Novak only came to this banquet to meet Lu Zhou. He still had to talk with Chinese officials about cooperating in the field of energy. Thus, he smiled and said, "I'll let you eat in peace. If you have time, you should visit Russia. I'm certain the food in Moscow will impress you."

Lu Zhou smiled and nodded.

"Well, I hope I get the chance to visit someday."

914 Some Are Celebrating, Some Are No

[The opening ceremony of the International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference came to a successful conclusion. Academician Lu delivered an important speech on behalf of the Chinese academic community.]

The newspaper headline was extra long.

The content behind this headline shocked everyone.

The Lunar Hadron Collider construction is going to begin in a month!

With a budget of US\$20 billion!

More than 200 particle physics institutes around the world are participating!

This included the well-known physics center CERN, as well as the Princeton Physics Department. Even people outside of academia heard about these research institutes.

Of course, this wasn't why people were surprised.

What really shocked people was that while the project had a budget of US\$20 billion, China, as the project initiator, only had to fork up 10 billion.

The United States was going to cover 5 billion!

The second the news article came out, online forums were flooded with political discussions...

[Pigs are starting to fly, I can't believe the Americans are so kind?]

[I can't believe this, Academician Lu did it!]

[This is incredible... If I recall correctly, the space race was still going on last year, how come the Americans are giving up?]

[Regardless, this project will benefit humanity as a whole. It's good that multiple countries are participating. The Americans probably don't want their physics community to fall behind by not participating...]

[I just hope the Americans are not making unreasonable demands.]

[Otherwise, we'll kick them out of the project!]

The news caused a considerable amount of discussion on the Internet, with various keywords relating to the event starting to trend.

Soon after, almost all of the Chinese new media outlets were filled with headlines regarding the aerospace engineering project.

A super project with more than 50 countries participating...

A project that was going to be in history books...

All of this was being led by China.

This was unimaginable a decade or even a couple of years ago.

After all, when China was still researching controllable fusion, the United States had an advantage in aerospace. But now, the tables had turned.

Even though there were always trolls and haters, most people were happy to see their country becoming stronger.

US\$10 billion wasn't a small number, but it was a fair price to pay to make "the entire world's scientists working for us".

However, compared to the Chinese media outlets, the North American media outlets were not as happy.

The liberal side had a fairly tame reaction, but on the other hand, it was like the White House slapped the conservatives in the face.

Even though they knew their politicians were money-hungry sell-outs, they didn't expect the government to do something like this.

A well-known host on a political talk show complained to his audience in the latest episode.

"How is Congress so stupid! China is our biggest competitor in the space race! We're giving them 5 billion dollars to support their project! This is crazy!"

China was America's strongest enemy.

However, the White House was now spending money to help China build the Lunar Hadron Collider!

Many conservatives thought their president had gone insane.

People even began to protest on the streets, holding up signs, shouting slogans, and marching in front of the White House.

“They’re claiming to build a collider on the Moon! This is the biggest Ponzi scheme of the century!”

“We should invest this money in people instead! Look at how many people are unemployed! Have you seen Skid Row in Los Angeles?”

“ ... ”

The vice president’s finger gently lifted the window blinds as he watched the marching protestors outside. He then muttered under his breath, “These idiots... Peanut brain Neanderthals. They have no idea what the real situation is, what a bunch of brain dead sheep.”

In response to China’s Lunar Orbit Committee, the President signed a “Reconstruction of the National Space Council (NSC)” executive order. The vice president would be the chairman of this committee and be responsible for rebuilding their dominance in aerospace.

The vice president was happy to gain more power as he was no longer just a mascot. However, ever since Mike was responsible for the National Space Council, he hadn’t been happy at all.

There was only one reason.

It was almost impossible to regain dominance in the aerospace industry.

All they could do now was to cut losses.

They had to open up their domestic markets and participate in China’s scientific research projects...

These protestors had no idea how to solve the problem; they had no idea the sacrifices the White House made!

Mike clenched his fists tightly. Suddenly, his office door opened, and a lanky man in a suit walked in with a document.

“If The New York Times heard you say that, I’m afraid you’ll be on the headlines instead of Academician Lu.”

“That’s not funny.” Mike stared at his assistant and said, “What’s up?”

The assistant put on a serious face and spoke.

“We might be in trouble.”

Mike said, “Tell me.”

“Look at this.”

The assistant placed the document on his desk.

Mike squinted and stared at the document.

It was an anonymous letter.

On the lower right corner of the letter, there was a logo of an eagle holding an assault rifle.

This symbol was a little disturbing.

Mike reached out but quickly retracted his hand.

“Don’t worry, we’ve examined the envelope, there’s nothing dangerous inside.” The assistant opened the envelope and placed the letter in front of Mike.

Mike began to read the letter.

[Dear Vice President Mike, we are Eagle Hunter, an anonymous group. You can think of us as... hackers.

[We know that information technology should not be used for terrorism, so we have restrained ourselves and remained silent.

[However, everyone has their breaking point. Watching our country being controlled like this... We realized that we can no longer stay silent.

[You have chosen to succumb in the face of power, so we will use our own methods to stop this asinine conference, to stop you from betraying our country.

[This is a war, and there are no innocent people in war.

[We will not stop until you meet our demands and suspend cooperation with the Chinese.]

The office became quiet again.

After a couple of seconds, the assistant took a deep breath and looked at the vice president.

“What should we do?”

Mike went silent for a while, and his mouth suddenly twitched.

Then, he grabbed the letter and handed it to his assistant.

“Give it to the FBI.”

Mike was irritated as he said, “Don’t bother me with tiny things like this in the future!”

“Yes, sir...”

The assistant took the letter and quietly left the office.

Mike slammed his fist on the desk and sat in his chair.

Hacker?

Betraying my country?

What a joke...

You’ve got to be kidding me...

However...

Mike was alarmed.

Even though the president and his staff members conducted a systematic analysis of the international situation and made the correct decision, they seemed to have underestimated the public’s reaction.

He pinched his eyebrows and reached out for the phone on his desk. He then called the president’s office.

Even though he wasn’t sure if the president knew about the letter, he had to report it immediately.

Not to mention there were US representatives attending a meeting in Beijing right now.

Perhaps he should inform Director Carson and ask him to act tougher at the meeting.

Mike didn’t want the public to see them as “soft”...

915 Full of Loopholes

Attending an international conference like this was often exhausting.

The first day was exciting and thrilling, but the second day was full of boring, endless meetings.

The funding part was already agreed upon. The China Ministry of Foreign Affairs already negotiated with various countries prior to the meeting. China was going to invest 10 billion, the US was investing 5, EU investing 2, Russia investing 1, the Japanese investing 800 million... Totalling US\$20 billion.

The only problem was setting up a budget committee for the project.

For some reason, the American representatives' attitudes totally changed on the second day. They were curt and aggressive.

Especially Director Carson; whenever he talked about setting up a budget committee, his smile quickly disappeared.

However, this was somewhat understandable.

After all, the budget committee had financial power over the Lunar Hadron Collider project. In theory, it had control over what and where the money was spent on... Everything related to the funding required a signature from the project budget committee.

It was unrealistic for the Americans to gain total control of the project spending; they could only hope to have a voice in the matter.

In order to balance China's power over the project, even Russia, who was originally on China's side, was inclined to support the US' demands.

Of course, Lu Zhou didn't have to worry about these kinds of things. There were other people to help him.

For example, Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the high-level officials from the Lunar Orbit Committee...

What Lu Zhou was worried about was the academic side.

Last year, on behalf of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, Luo Wenxuan contacted the Chinese Academy of Science, CERN, and other large research institutes. He brought together some of the top minds in the fields of theoretical physics, mechanical engineering, materials science, and aerospace engineering. With the help of these people, they completed the entire design plan of the Lunar Hadron Collider. But now that the "team" had expanded, with physicist and engineers from all over the world participating,

there was bound to be some problems. Many people proposed changes to the design scheme.

After all, this was a great opportunity for people to show off on the international stage.

Read more chapter on vi.pnovel.com

Companies like Space-X and Boeing were supportive of changing the design scheme. This was so that the final design scheme could benefit their companies in some way shape or form. They even spent money on hiring scholars to find problems in the design...

At the Beijing Grand Hotel.

A group of experts from physics and aerospace engineering sat in an auditorium-style conference room.

An old man wearing a plaid shirt and glasses stood in front of a projector screen. He then said passionately, "Because of these reasons, the original design plan is unrealistic and has to be improved.

"If we implement my improvements, we can cut the budget by 13% and reduce the construction risk.

"Think about it, how much is 13% of 20 billion? It's a huge number! We should spend this money on people that need it..."

Lu Zhou didn't know what this guy was rambling about.

In the end, Lu Zhou couldn't help but yawn. He turned his head to Mrs. Cramer, the chairman of CERN.

"Can we kick him off and put on the next person?"

Mrs. Cramer smiled and said, "I'm afraid not, the European Space Agency requested Professor Banderas to speak for 60 minutes."

Lu Zhou quietly said, "Why would someone make such a stupid request?"

Mrs. Cramer smiled and said, "Because before he went to teach at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, he used to work as an academic advisor at the European Space Agency. Before he came here, he sent a copy of his PowerPoint to the ESA."

Lu Zhou snorted and said, "Does he have connections?"

Mrs. Cramer paused for a second and said, "... It seems so."

Obviously, Professor Banderas used his connections at the European Space Agency to obtain the opportunity of giving this report.

The 13% reduced cost he mentioned wasn't a small number, so no wonder the European Space Agency gave him an opportunity to present his ideas.

After all, there was a chance they could save a lot of money.

After glancing at the PowerPoint, Lu Zhou flipped through the copy of the improvement plan he had on the table.

This report was full of loopholes, and the drawings and calculations didn't seem reliable at all.

Of course, this was just his "level 6" engineering intuition.

If Lu Zhou really wanted to find the specific problems, it would take quite some time. After all, engineering was very different from mathematics, things were often not so black and white...

It was difficult to immediately find problems in this report.

However, Lu Zhou had some tricks up his sleeve.

I can't believe I have to do this...

Lu Zhou sighed and took out his phone. He took some photos of the report in his hand and sent it to Xiao Ai.

[Here's a report, it looks terrible. I need you to organize it and model it into a 3D composition... Then present the composition and problems clearly.]

Even though Lu Zhou felt like his instructions were a little vague, it seemed like Xiao Ai understood him.

[Yes, Master! ~ (๑•̀ㅂ•́) ๑☆]

After seeing the text, Lu Zhou put his phone on his lap and quietly waited.

After a couple of seconds, a 2GB file was sent to his phone.

Lu Zhou opened the file and saw a three-dimensional blueprint drawing.

All of the complicated parameters were integrated into the drawing, such as the type of materials and the physical parameters in a low vacuum and low-

temperature environment, and the quantum computer was able to calculate a complete model of the lunar surface environment.

Lu Zhou stared at the blueprint and looked shocked.

Xiao Ai really is amazing.

It knows exactly what I want.

While the presenter was speaking, Lu Zhou took out a pen from his bag and began writing on a piece of draft paper.

Five minutes went by, and Professor Banderas was still rambling. Lu Zhou put the pen on the table and looked at his phone. He then raised his hand.

When he raised his hand, the entire conference room looked away from Banderas and stared at him.

Banderas was a little dissatisfied, and his instincts told him something was wrong.

He felt like Professor Lu was going to do something he wasn't going to like...

However, he thought that there was no way Lu Zhou had already found problems in his report.

"Do you have a question? Professor Lu."

Lu Zhou replied bluntly, "I'll just say it, forget about the PowerPoint, your report is full of problems."

"Sorry, I don't understand." Professor Banderas frowned and said, "There are problems in my report? Can you tell me where?"

Lu Zhou was amused.

You know damn well your report is horsesh*t, and you're still trying to lie to me?

"Turn on the projector's Bluetooth."

Professor Banderas paused for a second and then followed Lu Zhou's instructions.

The moment Lu Zhou's phone was connected to the projector via Bluetooth, the projector displayed a three-dimensional composition image on to the projector curtain.

“Wow...”

There was a commotion in the conference room, and people were surprised because they didn't see this composition in the report.

Professor Banderas' face turned blue.

Not just because Lu Zhou layered his blueprints together to create a 3D drawing, but also because there were red labels all over the 3D composition.

And each of these red labels represented a problem.

Even though he knew his blueprints weren't “perfect”, he didn't expect this many problems...

This guy...

How did he already create a model?!

Professor Banderas wasn't the only person that was surprised; everyone in the conference room looked at Professor Lu in awe.

Lu Zhou... is a freak...

Mrs. Cramer, who was sitting next to Lu Zhou, was also astonished. She had no idea how Lu Zhou was able to model a 3D composition blueprint in a couple of minutes...

However, Lu Zhou didn't plan on giving them an explanation.

He didn't have to explain anything.

The problems of the report were clearly presented.

Even a second-rate engineer would be able to see the obvious problems, so it was clear that Professor Banderas' design wasn't going to work.

“This is impossible, there must be a mistake, how did you...”

“As shown in the model, there are hundreds of loopholes.”

Lu Zhou tapped the table with a pen and spoke without emotion.

“Next.”

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 915 - Full of Loopholes -

915 Full of Loopholes

Attending an international conference like this was often exhausting.

The first day was exciting and thrilling, but the second day was full of boring, endless meetings.

The funding part was already agreed upon. The China Ministry of Foreign Affairs already negotiated with various countries prior to the meeting. China was going to invest 10 billion, the US was investing 5, EU investing 2, Russia investing 1, the Japanese investing 800 million... Totalling US\$20 billion.

The only problem was setting up a budget committee for the project.

For some reason, the American representatives' attitudes totally changed on the second day. They were curt and aggressive.

Especially Director Carson; whenever he talked about setting up a budget committee, his smile quickly disappeared.

However, this was somewhat understandable.

After all, the budget committee had financial power over the Lunar Hadron Collider project. In theory, it had control over what and where the money was spent on... Everything related to the funding required a signature from the project budget committee.

It was unrealistic for the Americans to gain total control of the project spending; they could only hope to have a voice in the matter.

In order to balance China's power over the project, even Russia, who was originally on China's side, was inclined to support the US' demands.

Of course, Lu Zhou didn't have to worry about these kinds of things. There were other people to help him.

For example, Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the high-level officials from the Lunar Orbit Committee...

What Lu Zhou was worried about was the academic side.

Last year, on behalf of the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, Luo Wenxuan contacted the Chinese Academy of Science, CERN, and other large research institutes. He brought together some of the top minds in the fields of theoretical physics, mechanical engineering, materials science, and aerospace engineering. With the help of these people, they completed the entire design plan of the Lunar Hadron Collider. But now that the “team” had expanded, with physicist and engineers from all over the world participating, there was bound to be some problems. Many people proposed changes to the design scheme.

After all, this was a great opportunity for people to show off on the international stage.

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Companies like Space-X and Boeing were supportive of changing the design scheme. This was so that the final design scheme could benefit their companies in some way shape or form. They even spent money on hiring scholars to find problems in the design...

At the Beijing Grand Hotel.

A group of experts from physics and aerospace engineering sat in an auditorium-style conference room.

An old man wearing a plaid shirt and glasses stood in front of a projector screen. He then said passionately, “Because of these reasons, the original design plan is unrealistic and has to be improved.

“If we implement my improvements, we can cut the budget by 13% and reduce the construction risk.

“Think about it, how much is 13% of 20 billion? It’s a huge number! We should spend this money on people that need it...”

Lu Zhou didn’t know what this guy was rambling about.

In the end, Lu Zhou couldn't help but yawn. He turned his head to Mrs. Cramer, the chairman of CERN.

"Can we kick him off and put on the next person?"

Mrs. Cramer smiled and said, "I'm afraid not, the European Space Agency requested Professor Banderas to speak for 60 minutes."

Lu Zhou quietly said, "Why would someone make such a stupid request?"

Mrs. Cramer smiled and said, "Because before he went to teach at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, he used to work as an academic advisor at the European Space Agency. Before he came here, he sent a copy of his PowerPoint to the ESA."

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"This is impossible, there must be a mistake, how did you..."

"As shown in the model, there are hundreds of loopholes."

Lu Zhou tapped the table with a pen and spoke without emotion.

"Next."

Chapter 916 Eagle Hunter

The dark web.

Inside a hacker forum.

A moderator created a discussion group called "Eagle Hunter", and soon after, a bunch of users went into the discussion channel and began to brag.

However, the bragging didn't last for long.

A person with the username "Boss" entered the discussion group. The channel instantly became quiet.

Boss: "Everyone is here?"

Hunter: "Here."

Boss: "Good, let's begin the meeting."

Lone Wolf: "Yes, sir!"

Vulture: "Yes, sir!"

" ... "

It was easy to organize a big hacker event like this, especially since they lived in the virtual world.

Even though they all belonged to the same "Eagle Hunter" hacker group, this organization wasn't actually binding.

Most of these people didn't like to feel constrained, not to mention most of them had dirty backgrounds.

Other than occasionally doing some dark market transactions, most people were doing their own things. Some even belonged to other hacker groups.

However, anyone in the hacker circle would recognize the IDs of people from the Eagle Hunter hacker group.

Most of these users were well-known hackers that came from the dark web, and most of them worked in the information security field. However, none of them knew who Boss was.

But it was clear that Boss was their leader.

After all, to become the leader of a hacker group, one would have to be technically capable.

None of them underestimated the strength of Boss.

Lone Wolf: "It's just a few servers, we'll penetrate them in no time."

Kid: "Yeah, yeah, let's begin, I can't wait to give the United States Congress and China a lesson!"

Boss: “Don’t get cocky. China has a lot of experts in information security. Remember, our goal is to stop the Lunar Hadron Collider project. This is the only way to make them take our request seriously.”

Hunter: What if the Chinese hackers retaliate?”

Boss: “Then it would be perfect for us.”

Their goal was to put pressure on the White House to exit from the Lunar Hadron Collider project.

As for the disruption of the Lunar Hadron Collider Conference in Beijing, that was their secondary goal.

Therefore, if the Chinese retaliated with attacks on servers such as NASA or the White House, it would be perfect for them. Panic would spread like wildfire.

After all, it was riskier for them to attack the American servers themselves.

Boss: “I have a list for the first batch of servers to attack. Everyone communicates the servers you’re going to attack to avoid repeated attacks.

“Remember, we are Eagle Hunter, we are defending the dignity of the United States.

“Remember who our enemy is.”

...

While the Lunar Hadron Collider meeting was going on in Beijing, an invisible force was quietly working in the background.

First was the official Everyone Daily website.

The website was soon full of spam and swear words, with a middle finger as the background image.

The web admin quickly discovered the problem, shut down the server, and reported the attack to the Ministry of Public Security.

However, before the Ministry of Public Security could respond, another wave of attacks came.

This attack was on the CTV official website, and this time, the domain name was hijacked. The website was set to redirect to another similarly offensive page.

Just like the Everyone Daily website, the CTV website had a giant middle finger in the background...

On the other hand, thousands of emails were sent to various department workers.

[Immediately terminate the International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference.

[Eagle Hunter]

This matter just got a lot more serious—it went from a cybersecurity attack to a terrorist attack.

After the head of the Ministry of Public Security received reports from his subordinates, his face turned green.

There was no way they were going to stop the Lunar Hadron Collider Conference, China would never compromise with terrorists.

Not to mention that the demands were ridiculous.

The Ministry of Public Security immediately convened an emergency meeting, inviting experts and academicians from the information security field. They formed a temporary task force to respond to this cyber attack. Taking extra precautions in financial and military fields...

...

Lone Wolf: "Boss, China is starting to fight back."

Boss: "Good! We have to keep attacking, keep the chaos going!"

Hunter: "The Chinese security department has retaliated, I nearly lost control of the CTV website... but their response was too slow."

When it came to cyberattacks, it was always more difficult to defend than to attack. When an attacker implanted a virus first, it was extremely difficult to recover.

Not to mention that the attack came at an unexpected time, so China wasn't prepared at all.

Hunter: "Several major Chinese media outlets are down, what's next?"

Boss: "Stand our ground, I have a gift prepared for them, we're close to victory."

Hunter: "Okay!"

Kid: "Haha, the boss is going to murder them!"

Lone Wolf: "Boss, I found that the Lunar Orbit Committee chief designer is the same person as the Lunar Hadron Collider chief designer... His name is Lu Zhou. Apparently, he's a famous scholar in China, and he's won the Nobel Prize and Fields Medal. I found out he works at Jin Ling University, maybe I should pay him a visit."

Boss: "Don't hesitate, just do it."

Lone Wolf: "Okay, Boss!"

...

Jin Ling University computer server room.

Dean Qin looked at Professor Wang, who was fiddling with the server, and he couldn't help but ask, "How is it?"

"Nothing yet..." The professor pushed his glasses and said, "I swear this server has something against Professor Lu. The same thing happened last time..."

Ten minutes ago, the Jin Ling University website was still up and running. Then, it was suddenly attacked. The website displayed an insulting image of Academician Lu. The administrators were completely locked out.

After hearing about the news, the computer science department professor immediately went to the server room.

And because Academician Lu was part of the mathematics department, Dean Qin came over as well.

“Don’t say that. Professor Lu is a huge help to us, we should kiss his ass.”
Dean Qin coughed and said, “Just do your best, try to fix the server.”

“It’s not the server, the server is fine. I think there’s a virus inside, it’s not turning on at all... F*ck sake, who is doing this, who hacks a school server...”
Professor Wang cursed as he typed on the keyboard.

The teacher standing at the entrance suddenly asked, “What if a student is trying to change their grade? I heard Professor Lu’s number theory class has a huge fail rate... Maybe they hacked the server and wanted to get revenge on Professor Lu.”

Professor Wang shook his head and said, “It’s definitely not a student. If a student could do this, they wouldn’t be a student, they could just become a computer science professor.”

Dean Qin suddenly remembered something and said, “Regardless of whether or not it’s done by a student, don’t talk about the photo and make sure Professor Lu doesn’t know about this! He’ll be furious if he finds out that someone is tarnishing his reputation...”

The teachers in the computer room looked at each other before nodding.

Suddenly, the professor standing at the entrance scratched his head and said, “I think this is bigger than we think.”

Dean Qin: “What?”

“Just go on Weibo.” The professor handed his phone to Dean Qin and said, “We’re not the only ones being attacked, ten minutes ago, Everyone Daily and CTV were also hacked

Chapter 917 Offending Someone

Throughout the entire morning, all Lu Zhou said was “next”.

Ever since he found out about Xiao Ai’s special ability, he couldn’t help but have some fun.

He would scan each report into his phone and ask Xiao Ai to change the texts and parameters into intuitive graphics. With the help from the quantum computer, none of the loopholes could get past Lu Zhou.

Of course, this wasn't entirely because of how powerful the quantum computer was; the main reason was that these reports were just terrible. Even a normal computer would be able to find mistakes.

If these people worked slightly harder on their reports, Lu Zhou wouldn't have been able to immediately find a problem just from his engineering intuition alone.

However...

These presenters that walked through the room had no idea what was waiting for them.

Other than a few presenters who made constructive suggestions, most of their ideas were immediately shut down.

The entire seminar turned into Lu Zhou's performance show.

So much so that for the last report before the lunch break, the moment Lu Zhou raised his hand, the presenter lowered his head and walked out of the room.

Because of this, this two-day conference was almost completed in half a day.

The people at the meeting were dumbfounded.

Both the presenters and the listeners...

...

Now that the morning meeting session was over, the rumors about Lu Zhou's "massacre" spread among the physicists and aerospace experts.

Lunch time.

Professor Klitzing was holding a plate full of food as he sat across from Lu Zhou and asked curiously, "I heard about that morning meeting, how did you do it?"

Lu Zhou, who had a bowl of barbecued meat and rice in front of him, asked, "Did what?"

"Don't pretend, you know what I'm talking about." Professor Klitzing smiled and said, "Presenting those images in the live report, that sounds so cool!"

Oh, so that's what he's talking about.

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, "It was alright, I mean I can't let those p*ss poor reports waste our time."

Professor Klitzing knew what Lu Zhou was doing, so he continued to ask, "Stop changing the subject, I want to know how you did it? Can you not tell me? If so, that's fine."

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "It's not that I can't, it's just that I don't know how to."

Professor Klitzing: "Can I take a guess?"

Lu Zhou: "Go ahead."

Professor Klitzing frowned and said, "I'm guessing... You have a team of engineers working behind the scenes, experts in modeling. When you send the report to them, they analyze the report and produce a model... Wait a second, that sounds unrealistic."

Professor Klitzing realized that his speculation was a little ridiculous.

What kind of engineering team could produce a model like that in ten minutes?

Even though he was a particle physicist, he still knew a little bit about engineering. After all, he often communicated with engineers for his particle physics experiments.

His experience told him that this wasn't something that could be done in a couple of minutes, especially the composition images...

However, Lu Zhou suddenly spoke.

"Kind of, you're correct."

Professor Klitzing said in disbelief, "I'm correct? Are you sure?"

Lu Zhou said, "Yeah, you're right."

I don't want to keep him guessing, I'll just admit it.

I mean, he's technically correct.

Xiao Ai, who was inside a quantum computer, was sort of like a team of engineers.

But speaking of which, I guess I have to thank Klitzing for coming up with an answer. I didn't even know how to explain this.

Lu Zhou made up his mind.

If someone asks me how I did it, I'll give them Klitzing's answer.

Professor Klitzing didn't expect Lu Zhou to confirm already. He had lost his interest and began to talk about particle physics instead.

However, Lu Zhou suddenly received a call.

"I have to take this call."

Klitzing smiled and said, "Of course, go ahead."

Lu Zhou stood up and picked up the phone. He then walked to a secluded area.

He was about to say hello, but Dean Qin spoke first.

"Did you offend someone?"

Offend someone?

Lu Zhou was a little muddled.

He was about to say no, but he then remembered that he had offended plenty of people. For example, he just offended dozens of people this morning.

"Why are you asking me this, I have no idea who you're talking about... Why don't you just tell me what happened?"

Dean Qin: "Our Jin University Academic Affairs Office website and server were hacked!"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and said, "What? Hacked? Is it serious?"

Lu Zhou wasn't surprised at all, at most he was a little confused.

The school servers were so bad that students choosing their timetables would make it go down.

As for why he was confused.

Who is bored enough to hack a school server? What is there to gain?

Dean Qin said, "It's fine, there's some damage, but not a lot. We lost some documents, but the students' grades are still there."

"Okay, good..." Lu Zhou patted his chest and suddenly said, "Wait a second, what does the server being hacked have to do with me?"

Dean Qin paused for a second. He then sighed and told the truth.

"Because your photo was on the website. Think about it, who did you offend?"

Lu Zhou: "...?!"

Chapter 918 Can't Forgive Them!

Lu Zhou swore that if he ever found out which student was behind this, he would upload a photoshopped photo of this student onto the school website...

Of course, he was just dreaming.

The school would never help him do something like this.

Not to mention that Lu Zhou realized that this cyber attack wasn't as simple as he had thought...

At the Beijing Grand Hotel.

Lu Zhou and Director Li were inside a small meeting room, and they began to talk about the situation.

“How did the US react?”

“The US is also confused. Director Carson contacted me this morning. I know they would never do anything like this.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Who could it be?

All of the super countries are here at the conference, who could be behind this?

Aliens?

Director Li drank some tea and moistened his throat before saying, “I’ve notified the relevant departments... But it seems to be too late.”

Lu Zhou sighed and said, “What’s the damage like?”

Director Li said with a serious tone, “It’s not difficult to recover from the damages, but the problem is that we don’t know where they will attack next.”

This was the most difficult part of cybersecurity.

When faced with an unknown hostile cyber force, the defender was always in the weaker position.

It would be much easier if they knew about the attacker’s motive, for example, which kind of financial gain they were after. As long as they knew the attacker’s motives, they could set up a defense line and set a trap. However, if there was no clear motive behind the attacks, all they could do was to sit and wait.

This was similar to how someone could “kill a random person on the street” and likely get away with it.

After hearing Director Li’s explanation, Lu Zhou’s intuition told him that this was an organized cyber-attack. However, he didn’t know what was the point of this attack.

“What do they want?”

“They want us to suspend the International Lunar Hadron Collider conference... It seems like they also want us to discharge you.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “If discharging me is their only request, I can easily satisfy them.”

Director Li seriously said, “Don’t think about it! Do you know what will happen if you do that?”

“Okay, okay. Fine, I know, I was just kidding, we’ll never agree to their demands...”

Director Li is quite serious about this...

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “Are there any ways we can deal with this?”

Director Li said, “We don’t... We have already contacted the United States. Let’s hope that they can cooperate with our investigation. However, they don’t seem to be enthusiastic. They said they will cooperate with any criminal investigation, provided we have enough evidence.”

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “So we just have to find them then.”

Director Li: “Yeah, we have to identify these people. That’s the only way to stop these attacks. Otherwise, even if we defeat them in a short period, they will find a way to come back.”

Lu Zhou: “Okay, I’ll try to think of a way.”

“You?” Director Li shook his head and said, “Leave this kind of stuff to us, I’m just telling you to not put any important personal or academic information online. We’re in a special time right now, and they are targeting you.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

They already targeted me okay!

They posted such a humiliating photo of me online!

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "I can't just let this go... With more power, comes more responsibility. It would have been fine if they left me alone, but they placed me as a target. I can't forgive them."

Director Li: "...?"

Lu Zhou looked at the old man and said, "All in all, I just can't forgive them!"

Director Li shook his head in disbelief and said, "Okay forget about it, with your programming skills... Just leave it alone. We have already set up a cyber warfare task force."

Director Li looked at Lu Zhou and spoke emotionally.

"As for you, I hope you can put your focus on this conference. You're representing the entire Chinese academic community!"

...

This cyberwar had gone into a stalemate.

It would be a lot easier if the attackers were domestic as the major network operators and electronics suppliers had left back doors for the security department. They could easily catch the hackers.

However, the problem was that the hackers were overseas.

No one had heard of the "Eagle Hunter" group before, but after the news broke out, their name began to spread.

Most people were criticizing them...

[F*ck, these Americans are despicable! Where are our hackers, let's give them a taste of their own medicine!]

[We don't have any hackers left, all of the good ones went to work for tech companies. (sigh)]

[I heard that there are underground hacker groups that have started to help fight back!]

[I think this battle is going to be difficult. They have the high ground here. Unless we can somehow implement military-grade security on every system, they'll just attack the weakest servers.]

[F*ck sake! Don't these Americans have anything better to do? What's the point of hacking some web servers?]

[Ahh, I'm afraid the United States government might be behind this...]

After Director Li left, Lu Zhou went back to his own room. He browsed through Weibo and saw that the Eagle Hunter group was on the trending page.

The hackers must be ecstatic to see their name spread around like this.

I can't just sit here and do nothing...

I can't just leave this alone.

Lu Zhou took out his phone and called Dean Qin.

"Hey, it's me, how's the computer server room going?"

Dean Qin sighed and said, "There's still a virus here, and the cybersecurity department sent someone to have a look. They said they couldn't do anything, so they wrote a report and left... We've already given up, we're going to reinstall the server OS and replace all of the hard drives."

They're giving up?

I can't let that happen.

Lu Zhou immediately said, "Don't reinstall just yet, there are a lot of computer experts at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. I'll send someone to help you."

After hearing Lu Zhou's words, Dean Qin paused for a second. He didn't expect Lu Zhou to do something like this.

"You have... experts in information security?"

"Of course!" Lu Zhou smiled and said, "We're also an independent information technology research institute, so we have plenty of cybersecurity experts."

Dean Qin smiled and shook his head.

“Okay then, quickly send someone over.”

Dean Qin didn’t have his hopes up at all.

The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study was a good research institute, but their main area was mathematics, computational materials science, and chemistry.

When it came to information technology, more specifically cybersecurity, these research institute scientists were not as strong as security engineers from large companies.

Not to mention that there was no way the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study information technology institute was comparable to the Jin Ling University software department. Even Principal Xu himself was in the information technology research field.

Even experts from the computer science department had no idea what to do...

After hanging up the phone, Lu Zhou told Xiao Ai what to do. He then called Luo Wenxuan.

Luo Wenxuan’s voice came from the phone.

“Hello?”

“It’s me.”

“... Just tell me what you want, you must want something from me again.”

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly.

Is it that obvious...

Lu Zhou’s smile quickly disappeared as he spoke in a serious manner.

“I need you to do me a favor.”

919 Xiao Ai, You Got This

It was evening.

Jin Ling University, computer server room.

Dean Qin patiently waited for Lu Zhou's "information technology expert", and when he saw Luo Wenxuan at the door, he was dumbfounded.

"Isn't this... Professor Luo from the physics department?"

"Yeah..." Luo Wenxuan looked at Dean Qin and said, "Is there a problem?"

"No..." Dean Qin said. He hoped that Luo Wenxuan just happened to be walking by. He asked, "Academician Lu sent you?"

Luo Wenxuan nodded again and said, "Yeah of course, why else would I be here?"

Dean Qin: "..."

Even though he didn't have high hopes for the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study, he didn't expect Lu Zhou to send a physics professor.

Has Academician Lu gone crazy?

This is like getting a veterinarian to do brain surgery.

Professor Wang, who was standing next to the server, spoke with an annoyed tone.

"Forget about it, I've been here all day. The enemy is an expert. This server is useless. Prepare to reinstall, I'm getting hungry."

Professor Wang had the only keys to the computer server room.

If Dean Qin weren't here, he would have left and went to eat a long time ago. He wanted to call the server supplier and ask for them to reinstall the software and replace the hardware.

Dean Qin sighed and looked at Luo Wenxuan as he said, "You should know what's going on, even our computer science professor is giving up. If you're here just to reinstall the operating system, you can go."

Professor Wang was a little comfortable, and he said, "Let me add to that, I'm not giving up, it's just that we were too late. If I were informed of this earlier, I might have been able to save it. But now that the entire server is fried, I can't do anything."

Luo Wenxuan scratched his head and said, "I don't know what you're talking about, all I know is that Lu Zhou gave me a USB and asked me to plug it into the servers."

Professor Wang stepped to the side and made an inviting gesture.

"Come on, go ahead, I want to see what happens."

"Okay..."

Luo Wenxuan walked up to the server and searched for a while before he finally found a USB port.

Professor Wang looked at his clumsy movements and was speechless.

When Luo Wenxuan finally inserted the USB, he took two steps back and looked at Professor Wang.

"Can you turn it on?"

Professor Wang turned on the server.

The fan in the server began to spin, and the computer screen lit up as if the server was resuscitated. Then, everything turned off again.

Professor Wang looked at the dead machine and impatiently said, "Now what?"

"I'm a physics researcher, I don't know..."

Luo Wenxuan awkwardly scratched his head and noticed everyone in the server room looking at him. He quickly took out his phone and called Lu Zhou.

The phone was quickly connected.

Luo Wenxuan immediately spoke.

“I plugged in the USB.”

Lu Zhou: “Okay, thanks.”

Luo Wenxuan couldn't help but ask, “... Now what?”

Lu Zhou said, “... What do you mean?”

Is he asking me to compensate him for the favor?

Come on...

I'll just buy you lunch next time.

Luo Wenxuan awkwardly scratched his head and said, “I mean, am I... done?”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Oh, yeah, you're done. We just have to sit and wait now. Thanks, you can leave now.”

The USB contained a piece of software written by Xiao Ai. Once the USB was inserted into the server, the software would automatically install itself onto the server.

Once the server data transfer was completed, Xiao Ai would have total control over the server. As long as the server was connected to the Internet, the program installed on the server could open a back door to the quantum computer at the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Then, the hackers wouldn't be facing some Jin Ling University professor, they would be up against an artificial intelligence quantum computer.

In the binary world, Xiao Ai was the apex predator. Not only because of its own intelligence, but also because of the raw computing power of quantum computers. Xiao Ai had surpassed the binary bottleneck and had the advantage of multi-state qubits...

With this kind of computing power, it could easily fight against the world's top supercomputers.

However, Luo Wenxuan was a little speechless.

“I thought I would get to witness something.”

Lu Zhou was amused as he said, “Oh yeah? Take out your phone and go on Weibo, you’ll get to witness something soon.”

Luo Wenxuan said, “... Okay, but I feel like the server is still down.”

“Don’t overthink it. Just tell Dean Qin to keep the power and Internet on, just make sure there aren’t any power outages.”

Lu Zhou cleared his throat and spoke.

“I’ll take care of the rest.”

After that, Lu Zhou hung up the phone.

Lu Zhou placed his phone on the table and stretched his back. He stood up from his hotel chair and slowly walked toward the floor to ceiling windows.

It was late into the night.

The brightly lit city lights shined on the window.

It should be day time in America right now.

But there’s a thunderstorm coming.

Lu Zhou looked at the view outside his window and chuckled.

“Xiao Ai.

“You got this.”

A string of text bubbles appeared on his computer screen.

[Yes, Master! (` · ω · ´) ♫]

[Xiao Ai got this! (๑•̀ㅂ•́) ٥]

Chapter 920: Dr. Z

New York.

The window blinds were closed inside an apartment with the air conditioner blasting in the background. The dark and cold room felt like a hospital morgue.

Three large monitors sat on the desk, where empty red bull cans scattered around the room.

A man went into his room with a pizza in his hand. He sat down at his desk and clicked on his mouse.

Three dark-themed code terminals filled his screen.

Most people would be confused by the lines of code on the screen, but not him.

“Finally...

“I got you! Perfect!”

Lone Wolf smacked his lips and smirked. He grabbed a slice of pizza and began biting.

He had completed another server hack.

Even though the Boss didn't order him to do anything, he believed that it was time to extend the attack to beyond media companies.

After all, it wasn't like they were an organization that had strict rules. Not to mention almost all of the Chinese media outlets had already been hacked.

He sifted through the lines of code and laughed at the thought of the Chinese administrators sh*tting their pants.

However, his account on a dark web forum received a message.

[Did my “shipment” arrive?]

He wasn't talking about a real shipment, but rather an attack request, such as a DDOS attack or something of a similar nature.

A DDOS attack was a similar cyber-attack method that could be done by noob hackers. Therefore, it was much more efficient for expert hackers to “order” these attacks instead of carrying out these attacks themselves.

Lone Wolf clicked on the unread message.

However, he suddenly froze.

[Um, Master is letting you a chance to redeem yourself, so you should surrender. (☹_☹ ‘)]

“Pfft...

“Hahaha!”

Lone Wolf laughed and leaned back on his computer chair. He deleted the message and logged off his sockpuppet account and logged onto a backup account.

“What a joke... You think I’m going to surrender just because you found my account? Go f*ck yourself!”

Finding his sockpuppet account ID wasn’t difficult, the entire hacker circle was paying attention to this event.

Anyone that looked through his account history could tell that he was part of the Eagle Hunter group.

Thus, he wasn’t worried at all. Trying to find his personal information from his sockpuppet account was nearly impossible.

However, on one of the terminals, he suddenly saw the Jin Ling University server light turn green.

This meant that their trojan was removed by the server administrator, and their server was online.

Do these fools want to die?

“Do they know who they are up against?”

Lone Wolf placed his hand on the keyboard. He was about to give them a lesson.

However, after he pressed down the first key, he was shocked.

A dialog box suddenly jumped out on his screen, displaying a string of unknown characters.

[(* · Ω ·) ✂ ㄣ ㄣ]

Lone Wolf: “???”

...

Cyber Security Bureau.

Inside an office.

Even though it was late into the night, the workers were still here.

A can of Coke was sitting on the computer desk as Director Hong stared meticulously at the computer screen. He suddenly spoke.

“F*ck sake, these rats!”

The enemies were like sneaky rats, biting them left and right.

Director Li from the State Administration for National Defense was also there. He frowned and asked, “Has the safety warning been issued?”

The technician sitting next to them looked at Director Hong and received a nod. He then looked at Director Li and spoke.

“It has been issued, but it won’t do much. Companies like Tencent and Alibaba already have good security. Some medium-sized companies received our notices, but there is nothing they can do... In fact, I think our warning might have increased the panic.”

Director Hong said, “It’s still better to inform them, what else can we do?”

“... There’s nothing else other than to switch the roles and become the attacker ourselves.”

The office suddenly became quiet, only keyboard tapping sounds could be heard.

Director Hong coughed and said, "Okay, forget about it. The higher-ups will never approve for us to attack. Once we become the attackers, that means that China has declared an international cyber warfare. Even though we were the ones that were hit first, we will be blamed... Right now, we need to collect evidence and find where these people are, then ask the local authorities of that country to arrest them."

Not to mention that they didn't even know who and where the attackers were. If they were to somehow retaliate, the international political damage would be unthinkable.

Also, the International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference was underway, affecting the international political situation was exactly what the hackers wanted.

Director Hong coughed and said, "How's the server recovery going?"

The information security engineer sitting in front of the computer spoke in a tired voice.

"Most of the large media domains have been restored... I've restored at least a dozen websites now, but we can't keep doing this forever."

A technician sitting in front of the computer in military clothes suddenly made an announcement.

"We found a new website with abnormal traffic activities, and it is now confirmed to have been hijacked."

Before Director Hong could speak, Director Li spoke first, "Who is it this time?"

"The state Trade and Development Council website."

After Director Hong heard that another website had fallen, he furiously slammed the table.

"Motherf*cker!"

The attack had spread beyond media websites and onto government departments.

Director Hong began to sweat.

Even though the major government department websites had reinforced security, the Chinese government was so large that there were just too many servers and websites. They could only rely on the servers' built-in firewalls and defenses.

And this wasn't his biggest worry.

If the attackers expanded their battlefield and attacked the medical, energy, and logistics industries, the damage could be catastrophic...

The losses would be unbearable.

However, the engineer sitting at the computer screen suddenly frowned and looked closer at his screen.

"Wait a second, something is wrong."

Director Hong immediately said, "What?"

"The attacker's traffic data we were tracking has disappeared..."

Director Hong suddenly turned blue.

"Did the attackers find us?"

The information security engineer shook his head and said, "I'm certain they haven't found us... They all just inexplicably disappeared one by one."

Director Hong wanted to ask what was going on, but a sonorous voice came from the side.

"The Trade and Development Council website is up!" the man in the military uniform said. He stood up excitedly and said, "It seems like they've retreated!"

Director Hong frowned and carefully stared at the screen.

"But why did they retreat?"

The engineer shook his head.

"I don't know..."

He was 100% certain that the attackers didn't notice them tracking their data traffic.

However, there was no other reason for them to retreat like this.

This was amazing for those servers that were under attack, but the Cyber Security Bureau wasn't happy about this at all.

Not catching the attackers meant they were open to a second attack at any time.

If they couldn't find out what the reason behind the retreat was, they wouldn't be able to sleep tonight.

Director Hong looked around the office and spoke in a firm tone.

"Continue the investigation, it doesn't matter that the attacks have stopped, we have to find them!"

"Okay!"

Even though they didn't win the battle, it was still a small victory.

The "soldiers" in the office were still fighting on the front line.

Director Hong nodded and went into his office. He was about to sit down, but he heard a knock at his door.

"Come in."

The door opened and a skinny employee walked in.

"Director!"

Director Hong: "What?"

"We just received an email... It's a bit special."

"What kind of email?"

"There's some strange code in the email, and also some text saying..." The staff member hesitated for a bit and said, "They found the attacker's IP address."

They found the attacker's IP address?

Director Hong was ecstatic.

He immediately asked, "Who sent the email? Did we have a way to contact them?"

"No..." the staff member shook his head and said, "The email is signed by one person."

"Who?"

"Dr. Z..."

Director Hong: "...?"

Director Li: "???"

Chapter 921: An Expert!

The dark web.

On an unknown forum.

A group of people logged onto their accounts and excitedly reported their results.

"Not bad!"

"Just some basic techniques, I think the page redirect was quite creative."

"Forget about it, your photoshop skills are dog sh*t."

"..."

Boss: "Quiet."

Everyone in the chat quieted down as they waited for their leader to speak.

Boss: "The Chinese have clearly ignored our demands, while the White House has ignored our threats. It seems like our attacks haven't affected them."

“If that is the case, we should begin our second phase.”

Hunter: “I’m ready, Boss.”

Kid: “Haha, finally!”

Kid: “Lol, I’ve been wanting to attack Congress for a while now.”

Hunter: “The Congress and White House are two different things.”

Kid: “Who cares? They’re the same for me!”

Ghost: “Oh yeah, where is Lone Wolf? Didn’t he find that chief designer Academician Lu’s university and shut down their website?”

Kid: “Someone go find him.”

Dr. Z: “He’s not going to come. :p”

Suddenly, a new user appeared in the chat room.

The entire chatroom went silent.

A two-story house in Los Angeles.

A man in his thirties stared at his laptop screen.

Dr. Z?

Who is that?

Is that Lone Wolf’s second account?

But we said no duplicate accounts allowed in the group...

In the group chat.

Hunter: “Who are you?”

Ghost: “Is this someone’s second account?”

Kid: “Hey, bro, we use our main IDs to communicate. We’re going to kick you out, we’re not joking around.”

Dr. Z: “I am Dr. Z. Master gave me this ID, so this is my name. (๑•́•๑) ✨”

Hunter: “...?”

Kid: “???”

The texting style of Dr. Z was a little weird.

These hackers had surfed the dark webs for many years, and they had seen many types of peculiar texting, but they had never seen someone use this kind of emoticons before.

They all knew this new guy was an expert.

None of them had doubts about this.

This guy was able to get into this dark web forum and gain access to Boss’ private chatroom. Either this was Boss himself or someone installed a backdoor into Boss’ server.

Who is this guy?!

The man in his thirties quickly stood up and placed his laptop aside. He then began typing on a PC keyboard.

His name was Mason, a low-level employee that worked at a Los Angeles software company. The only outstanding part about him was that he was the legendary dark web hacker—Boss!

As the leader of the Eagle Hunter group and a famous figure in the dark webs, his hacking skill was world-class.

This was one of the reasons he was responsible for managing the Eagle Hunter server.

Not only because they trusted his leadership, but they also trusted his skills.

But now, someone had broken through his server and entered a restricted chat room...

Mason checked the server and didn’t find any back doors. He had a serious look on his face, and he had a gut feeling that something was wrong.

It was too late to figure out how the other party gained access to his server. Instead, he went on his laptop and immediately typed.

Boss: "Everyone, leave this chatroom now. Begin the fourth phase. Long live Eagle Hunter!"

He was obviously not the only one that realized something was wrong.

After he sent out this message, the group members went offline one by one.

Even though these hackers usually didn't follow strict rules, when it came to the safety of their own lives, they gladly listened to their leader...

Mason continued to type on his laptop.

Someone entered his encrypted chat room.

It was entirely possible that the attacker had gained access to his server and copied all of the data... including the chat records...

Mason began to sweat, and he started to get a little dizzy.

There was no point in unplugging the server. He had to find any evidence the attacker left, hack into the other party's server, and delete all of the evidence.

The things in his server alone would be enough for him to stay in prison for a very long time...

Fortunately, the other party was stupid enough to send a message in the chatroom.

This was his opportunity!

Mason's fingers danced on the keyboard as he desperately tried to salvage the situation. He suddenly saw that the user appeared in the chatroom again.

Dr. Z: "Um, I think you should just give up. Kicking me out of the chat room or hacking into my computer won't do anything. (" 🐱 🐱 ")"

Mason was startled. He looked around his room and locked eyes on another laptop sitting behind him.

His face turned white.

As expected, his worst nightmares came true.

For some reason, the laptop LED camera was shining red.

Due to work-related needs, that was his only laptop camera that wasn't taped over...

Faced with a god-like enemy, Mason decided to give up.

He looked at the laptop and murmured, "How did you do it... How? I didn't find any trace of your break-in. None of the alarms were set off... Are you even a human?"

It was almost like the attacker heard him.

Another message appeared in the chatroom.

Dr. Z: "Because your code is too weak, I just used your backup administrator account. (ノ▽ノ)."

Mason had a hysterical smile on his face, and it looked like he had aged ten years. He stared at the code on his screen silently.

There was no point in trying to fight back.

He took out a lighter and lit a cigarette.

He exhaled a ring of smoke.

"Is it too late to surrender?"

Dr. Z: "I don't know, that depends on how fast the police are. (ノ_ノ)"

Chapter 922: Boss Is Offline!

It was an extraordinary day for the hacker community.

Trying to disrupt the International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference, hacker group Eagle Hunter declared cyber warfare on China.

In less than 12 hours, more than 50 website servers and domain names were hijacked, and dozens of companies reported millions of dollars in damages.

It seemed like the attacks were going to continue, and while everyone was wondering what the hackers would do next, the war suddenly ended abruptly.

Not just that, but several well-known hacker accounts went offline. It was like they vanished from the dark webs.

Especially Boss.

He was one of the top dogs in the hacker community, and the FBI had been trying to capture him for years, but their efforts were to no avail.

However, it seemed like this person suddenly vanished from the Internet. He didn't reply to any messages, he stopped updating his personal blog, and his website went offline.

It was like he disappeared off the planet...

On a well known dark web forum.

Many scholars in the field of information technology, as well as white hats that worked for well-known technology companies, had accounts on this forum. They talked about everything from industry news to the latest technology.

Because the war between Eagle Hunter and China was such a huge event, half of the forum users were talking about it. Thus, the forum moderators decided to create a new forum channel specifically for this event...

[Does anyone know what happened?]

[It's been almost an hour, did they give up?]

[No way, an hour ago the Chinese side was still desperately trying to stay alive. There is no reason for Eagle Hunter to retreat.]

[Does the Boss have an email? Should we ask what he's doing?]

[Apparently, he was caught.]

The channel went silent for a while.

After a couple of minutes, someone broke the silence.

[No way, you have to be kidding me?]

[Yeah, it's Boss! I've seen him make ATMs shoot out money before, and the FBI has been tracking him for years. How did he get caught?]

No one believed that this veteran hacker was defeated by someone from the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

Most people thought that even though the Eagle Hunter hackers had disappeared, they would reappear after laying low for a while.

It was almost impossible to track an experienced hacker.

Especially since Boss was a veteran hacker. If Boss didn't want to get caught, there was no way anyone could catch him.

While everyone was talking about the Eagle Hunter members, a Los Angeles evening newspaper published their latest breaking story...

[Leader of well-known hacker organization "Eagle Hunter" has been caught!]

Once the news broke out...

The hacker community's jaws fell on the floor!

...

Ever since the Cyber Security Bureau received that email, they strengthened their defenses and tried to investigate the origin of the email.

Even though they had many doubts about the legitimacy of the email, that was their only clue.

After Director Li saw that the email was signed by Dr. Z, he seemed to have realized something. He patted Director Hong on the shoulder and told him to investigate this email.

Even though Director Li of the State Administration for National Defense was a layman, Director Hong still took his advice.

Tracking an IP from outside the country wasn't easy, especially without sufficient evidence. The local authorities of that country could refuse to cooperate. However, they discovered that the IP address was from a domestic location.

Director Hong immediately called the Ministry of Public Security and contacted the relevant local police station. Soon after, the hacker with the ID "Kid" was captured.

Everyone was surprised.

Contrary to the ID, the hacker wasn't a "kid" at all; it was a middle-aged man in his thirties.

According to the neighbors, the suspect had been living there for years.

The police easily found the electronics equipment used to commit the crime in Kid's home, as well as his personal laptop and phone.

The police found that not only was this person involved in various hacking organizations, he also had a strong hatred toward power and authority.

According to his confession, he was brought into the Eagle Hunter organization by Boss last year. He helped the organization locate and target domestic servers and was a "middle man" for cyber attacks.

As for his motive for the attacks, it was obviously because of his resentment toward society...

...

It was four o'clock in the morning, and the sun was almost about to rise.

Director Hong was drinking a cup of coffee when he looked at Director Li and said, "You know Dr. Z?"

Director Li took a sip out of his vacuum flask and said, "Actually, I'm not sure."

You're not sure if you know him?

"Then why were you so certain that he's right..." Director Hong coughed and said, "Granted, you were correct. I have no intention in finding out his identity, I'm just curious."

Director Li: “Actually, the reason why I believed him is that he’s helped us in the past.”

Director Hong frowned and said, “Helped us?”

“That was almost six months ago.” Director Li began to reminisce as he said, “The Ares program was in trouble, and due to various humanitarian reasons, we launched a spacecraft toward Mars...”

The entire office began to listen to Director Li’s story.

He talked about everything from the Mars landing to the colonists being infected. He even put down his vacuum flask and gestured with his hands.

When he began to hear snoring sounds, he awkwardly stopped his story...

Chapter 923: Dr. Z’s Identity!

The news of the arrest of “Boss”, leader of the Eagle Hunter organization, caused a sensation in the hacker and information security community.

No one expected Los Angeles to be able to catch such a huge criminal in such a short frame of time...

What surprised people the most was that “Boss”, who the FBI had been trying to catch for nearly a decade, lived in a townhome 500 meters away from a police station.

Apparently, the reason why the Los Angeles police were able to catch the perp so quickly was because of an anonymous tip.

The email didn’t leave any contact information, only an alias—Dr. Z.

This name sounded quite mysterious.

The Los Angeles Times reporters had contacted experts in the field of information security, in hopes of finding out who Dr. Z was. They hadn’t been able to find any clues behind the identity of this mysterious person.

It was like this person came out of thin air.

Some people thought that Dr. Z was a Chinese information technology expert. After all, less than 10 hours after “Boss” was arrested, China made an arrest on “Kid”.

Some people speculated that Dr. Z was a high-profile hacker in the Chinese “Honker Union” hacker group. After all, the Americans knew that China had many mathematics and computer science experts.

Some people thought back to the Mars incident some time ago, where an unnamed biologist published a thesis that provided a key solution for the international team of experts that were working on the vaccine...

However, this conjecture wasn’t very realistic. After all, if Dr. Z was an expert in biology, he would have nothing to do with information technology. People were more inclined to believe that Dr. Z was just an anonymous hacker.

They thought the hacker just copied the name “Dr. Z” from the Mars incident...

The name was used as a symbol, similar to Batman’s Batarangs...

Regardless, this hacker was able to track the IP address of Boss and inform Interpol for an arrest. This kind of skill was unseen before.

Not only was the FBI investigating the identity of Dr. Z, but major Silicon Valley companies were also trying to find him.

Companies like Amazon and Microsoft were trying to find out who Dr. Z was, and even the CEO of Apple stated on Twitter that if Dr. Z wanted to use his skills on something that would benefit society, Apple would gladly compensate him...

...

After Lu Zhou told Xiao Ai to handle the cyber attack, he went on his bed and flipped through his research notes. He read some research and gradually fell asleep.

Because he overworked himself the previous day, he slept until noon.

He had quite a relaxed schedule for the day, and he only had to attend a meeting at 3 pm.

Lu Zhou climbed out of bed and grabbed his phone from the bedside table. He looked at his WeChat notifications and saw that Luo Wenxuan sent him a dozen messages.

“F*ck sake, why does he want now?”

Lu Zhou’s sleepy eyes began reading the messages.

The messages were filled with exclamation marks and surprised emojis. Luo Wenxuan repeatedly called him “nutty” and “impressive”.

Lu Zhou gradually smiled.

He thought that Luo Wenxuan must have read something about him on Weibo.

Speaking of which, there was something else he was looking forward to.

Lu Zhou shook his head and didn’t reply. He threw his phone aside and picked up the remote control. He then turned on the TV and opened the international news channel.

Just like he had expected, the news was reporting on last night’s events.

The hackers were arrested and this cyber warfare was finally over.

Lu Zhou wasn’t surprised at all. Even though Xiao Ai still lacked some emotional intelligence, its hacking abilities were state of the art.

What surprised Lu Zhou the most was that one of the hackers was in China?

*Why the f*ck...*

Would he stay in China?

After Lu Zhou turned off the TV, his phone started to vibrate.

It was a message from Xiao Ai. Lu Zhou knew that his little buddy was excited.

Xiao Ai: [Master, did Xiao Ai do a good job? ($\geq \omega \leq *$)]

Lu Zhou: “Everything is done?”

Xiao Ai: [Yeah! All of the evidence was handed over to the police! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)]]

Lu Zhou wanted to hug Xiao Ai through the phone as he said, “Well done!”

Xiao Ai: [You’re welcome, compliment me more, please! (≥ω≤ *)]

Lu Zhou: “...”

Can this thing be a little less cocky...

It should learn from its master to be humble.

Lu Zhou climbed out of bed naked and sat in front of his computer.

He scrolled through Weibo and saw that the “Eagle Hunter” organization was on the trending section...

[Eagle hunter, more like chicken hunters!]

[I can’t believe it, we were able to find these American hackers within a day!]

[Apparently, a hacker called Dr. Z was the person behind all of this, and he single-handedly found the IP address of all of the members!]

[No way, I thought Dr. Z was a biologist?]

[Maybe someone’s copying his name? Regardless, we should thank Dr. Z. Who knows how many websites he saved!]

Lu Zhou looked at the posts and felt like a hero.

Of course, he knew that this was mainly due to Xiao Ai’s quantum computer.

However, considering that both the quantum computer and Xiao Ai were his property, he felt like he should take some credit.

Suddenly a string of texts popped up on the lower right corner.

[Master, are you going to put on some clothes? (/// ω ///)]

Lu Zhou looked at the message and paused for a second.

Emm...

Okay, I guess browsing the web naked is kind of barbaric.

But there's no one else in the room, who cares?

Lu Zhou looked at his computer and spoke.

“Why do you care, you're just a program.”

Xiao Ai: [Yeah, but Xiao Ai is only 7 years old. (´⊙_⊙‘)]

Lu Zhou: “...”

Jesus Christ.

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something and said, “Oh yeah, don't turn on the camera without my permission, or unless necessary.”

Xiao Ai: [Oh... (°△° |||)]

Lu Zhou closed his laptop and put on a suit. He adjusted his tie in front of the mirror and nodded with satisfaction.

Who's that handsome professor in the mirror?

Suddenly, his phone on the bedside table began to ring.

Lu Zhou picked up the phone and spoke.

“Hello?”

Director Li spoke from the other end of the phone.

“Are you available?”

Lu Zhou looked at his watch and said, “Yeah, why?”

Director Li: “It's lunchtime, come to the buffet, I want to talk with you.”

Chapter 924: People Want to Be Geniuses

Lunch.

Hotel buffet.

Lu Zhou walked in and immediately saw Director Li sitting by the window.

Lu Zhou sat across from him and looked at his eyebags. He paused for a second and asked, "What... happened?"

"Nothing, I didn't sleep last night." Director Li tried to wake himself up. He said with a solemn expression, "Remember about the cyber attacks I told you? According to Interpol, the main hacker has been arrested in Los Angeles."

Lu Zhou: "... Oh."

Lu Zhou already knew about this.

However, Director Li didn't notice that, so he continued to speak in a stern tone, "One of the criminals was located domestically, and as for the other criminals, we submitted their information to Interpol and the LAPD took over the case."

Lu Zhou: "Ok."

Director Li: "Don't you think it's strange?"

Lu Zhou: "..."

What's so strange?

They've been talking about this on TV all morning, what's so strange about it.

Director Li stared at Lu Zhou and suddenly spoke.

"Honestly, how did you find out who the hackers were?"

Lu Zhou paused for a second and reacted quickly. He tried to act confused.

"I saw it online, why? I read about it this morning."

However, Director Li didn't give up. Instead, he said, "Speaking of which, we received help from an expert. If it weren't for their help, we would still be in shambles."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Yeah, I heard about it. It’s someone called Dr. Z, right? One man taking down the entire Eagle Hunter group, he has to be an expert.”

Director Li looked slightly disappointed, but he quickly recovered.

It didn’t really matter if Lu Zhou was Dr. Z or not. Also, it was entirely possible that Dr. Z could be an expert from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Director Li just wanted to satisfy his curiosity.

Even if Lu Zhou really was Dr. Z, if Lu Zhou didn’t plan on making this public, Director Li certainly didn’t want to ask any more questions.

Director Li cleared his throat and began talking.

“Even though we were victorious in this cyberwar, we have to learn from this experience and strengthen our cybersecurity defenses. This attack threatened much sensitive information and destabilized society. The Communist Party of China is ready to...”

Lu Zhou coughed and said, “I know the rough situation, but I’m just a mathematician, so you’re... speaking to the wrong person.”

I don’t know why...

But I feel like Director Li knows that I’m Dr. Z.

This isn’t good...

I’m going to reveal myself eventually...

But now is not the time.

“Listen to me.” Director Li put on a serious face and said, “In order to deal with any possible threats, the Communist Party of China intends to invest heavily in quantum computing technology. This is to strengthen our network defense and counterattack abilities.”

Strengthen quantum computing technology?

Lu Zhou was supportive of this idea, but something didn’t feel right.

Lu Zhou hesitated for a bit and asked, "But it's not going to be cheap."

Forget about the lunar collider, the semiconductor industry cluster was still underway.

Lu Zhou alone spent more than 100 billion yuan on state-funded projects last year, and it wasn't like the government could just keep printing money like this.

"Um... I have to thank you for this." Director Li smiled and said, "Ever since the Southeast Asia Regional Power Grid Plan was implemented, it has achieved tremendous results. Numerous Southeast Asian countries have access to cheap and clean energy. This has created at least US\$50 billion in revenue and is expected to grow. We have quite a lot of funding for state scientific research projects."

Lu Zhou nodded.

No wonder!

No wonder they have so much money to burn.

If this was two years ago, there was no way he could have gotten the Lunar Hadron Collider project approved.

So far, the aerospace projects had barely broken even, and Lu Zhou still needed more time to prove that his decisions were correct.

I guess nuclear fusion is still where the money is.

Cheap and clean energy was being exported to neighboring countries at 1/10th the price of coal power plants. As the power grid continued to expand in Western and Southeast Asia, sooner or later East Asia Energy would become the largest company in the world.

Director Li: "All in all, you don't have to worry about funding, money is not a problem. Didn't we talk about this last time? Isn't that carbon-based chip suitable for quantum computing? I just want to ask, is it realistic to use the carbon-based chips to develop topological quantum computers?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "What can I say... Of course I'm going to say it's realistic."

Director Li said in a serious manner, "I trust that you're a scholar that seeks the truth. You wouldn't betray god for a small profit."

Actually, Lu Zhou wanted to say that this wasn't going to be a small profit and that he was an atheist. He didn't believe in god.

However, there was one thing Director Li was right about.

Lu Zhou was a scholar that sought the truth.

Lu Zhou sighed and said, "Majorana fermions can be found in the material used for carbon-based chips, so this is a great starting point. As long as we can directly observe the zero-energy mode of pure Majorana fermions, it is possible to create quantum topology calculations."

Director Li began to feel excited, and he put his hands on his knees and asked, "So what you're saying is, this will work?"

"I never said that." Lu Zhou said, "Finding out its feasibility will take a lot of theoretical calculations. You can't just throw money at it and hope for the best."

Director Li calmed down and thought for a second.

"Then, what do you think we should do?"

Lu Zhou said, "My suggestion is to take it easy, find some experts and carefully research the technical feasibility side, and find a technical route. After that, you can invest all the money you want."

This was the safest and least risky approach.

If the technical route proved to be feasible, the theoretical expert team would be put on research and development and the project would be on its way.

Investing money without a direction could induce an overflow of capital, thus wasting social resources.

"You're right..." Director Li sighed and said, "We should take it slow and easy."

After contemplating for a second, he spoke.

“After I go back to the office, I’ll type up some documents and form a quantum computer theoretical expert team... Do you have any recommendations?”

Lu Zhou said, “Professor Wu Tianqun, the carbon-based semiconductor technology was created by his team. Also some experts in the field of quantum computing. I can’t name any names right now, but I’ll send you a list later.”

Director Li was overjoyed that Lu Zhou was willing to help.

“Thank you so much!”

After lunch, Director Li didn’t stay for any longer. He quickly got into his car and drove away.

Seeing how he didn’t sleep all night, Lu Zhou was a little worried about him.

For a man of his age, he should be more careful.

Lu Zhou shook his head and took out his phone. He set a reminder for himself to send over a list of quantum computing experts.

However, he suddenly had a strange thought.

If I only recommend people that I know, wouldn’t that monopolize the entire future of the quantum computing field?

However, this thought quickly disappeared...

For some reason, he suddenly remembered one person.

Which was Academician Zhou, the person that fought with him on the controllable fusion project.

Lu Zhou shook his head and put his phone in his pocket.

“No wonder everyone wants to become a genius.

“Power really is an addictive thing...

“Fortunately, power is not that appealing to me.”

Chapter 925: Trade Off

White House.

President's office.

After FBI director Mueller entered the office, the president's assistant sitting outside the door could hear the president yelling.

"You bunch of idiots!"

Mueller stood in front of the president and took a deep breath. He then said, "This is our fault... We expected them to act, but we didn't expect things to move this fast."

Even though the White House was happy to see China suffer losses, they didn't want it to happen this way.

The negotiations on the Lunar Hadron Collider were still underway. They were finally able to recruit some allies through diplomatic means and wanted to put pressure on China in regard to the budget committee.

However, their plan was ruined.

Because of the cyberattacks, most of their allies began doubting them. Many nations began to express their doubts on whether or not America wanted to participate in this project at all.

Maybe the Americans were only here to disrupt this meeting?

After all, China was America's biggest space competitor...

Suddenly, the phone on the desk began to ring.

The president took a deep breath and picked up the call.

Director Carson's voice traveled through the phone.

"It's me."

President: "I know it's you, speak!"

Carson knew the President was in a bad mood, but he didn't dare to ask why.

Carson cleared his throat and spoke.

“The Chinese are putting pressure on us, those f*cking idiots. I drafted a plan for the budget committee last night, and as soon as I took it out at the conference today, the Chinese began questioning me about the cyber attacks. They are using this as a tactic for negotiation.”

He took a deep breath and continued in a stern tone, “Now that we’re at a negotiation disadvantage, even the neutral countries have expressed serious concerns regarding our domestic cybersecurity and terrorist issues.”

The president couldn’t help but say, “Didn’t you tell them that the attacks and the hadron collider are two completely different things?”

“I said that, but they said that the Eagle Hunter was supported by the federal government and that they’ve already obtained enough evidence...” Director Carson paused for a second and said, “Just wondering, is that a possibility...”

The president said, “Of course not! Why would I approve such a stupid plan! What could we possibly gain from destroying some Chinese servers? What do you think, Mr. Mueller?”

Mueller nodded quickly and said, “Of course! I would never approve of such a stupid thing... But just in case, we should contact the CIA and make sure they didn’t do anything.”

“Now is not the time to blame others.” Director Carson said in a tired voice, “The situation is not good for us, so my suggestion is that... we should lie low. Otherwise, China might reconsider our participation in the project...”

The office became quiet.

One could hear a pin drop.

Reconsider our participation in the project...

A hint of bitterness appeared in the president’s eyes.

If this were ten years ago, this would have been a joke.

Back then, the United States was a nation of industry. It was impossible for any country to organize such a large scientific research project without help from the United States.

But now...

China was thinking about kicking them out of the group?

The tables had turned.

The president went silent for a while and sat down at his desk.

He tapped his finger on the desk and said, "We can forgo our other requests, but you must ensure that we have at least three voting seats on the budget committee. That is not up for debate."

He didn't want to risk China kicking them out of the project.

China needed America's cooperation, but America needed China more...

Director Carson sighed in relief.

"I'll try my best..."

The president slammed his fist on the table and cursed, "These f*cknig idiots!"

Director Mueller looked at the president and held his breath.

Because of the Eagle Hunter group, the United States was now at a huge negotiation disadvantage.

If the Russians couldn't stand their ground, China would have total control of the budget committee...

The Chinese could easily take over Russia's voting seats; after all, the Russians only invested a small amount of money in the project...

...

In Lu Zhou's opinion, what happened online was only a minor disturbance.

Whether or not Eagle Hunter was backed by the White House didn't matter to him at all.

The source of the attack came from American soil. China could easily use this to gain an "advantage" over the budget committee negotiations.

Of course, the Lunar Orbit Committee had ultimate control over this matter.

The Americans had to prove themselves.

Otherwise, the Americans would just label this as an “accident”.

Over the past few days, Lu Zhou had been working on the Lunar Hadron Collider Research Center, as well as helping Director Li find a list of experts to demonstrate the technical feasibility of quantum computing.

Lu Zhou realized that it was quite difficult to keep this quiet.

Jin Ling University was one of the top five software engineering universities. They had two big names in the field of quantum computing—one was even an academician.

It would be a bit unfair to exclude these quantum computing experts just to avoid suspicion. Therefore, Lu Zhou wrote both of their names down.

Some of the other experts were from Shuimu and Yan Universities, and there were ten people in total. It wasn't after Lu Zhou finished compiling the list did he realize that he was caring about things outside of academia.

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head. He made up his mind to never do something like this again. After that, he sent this list to Director Li's email.

I'm finally done!

Lu Zhou stretched his back and was about to make some coffee.

However, suddenly an email arrived in his inbox.

Lu Zhou looked at the name and paused for a second.

Professor Wu Tianqun?

Speak of the devil?

Lu Zhou curiously opened the email.

The email was short.

There was only one sentence.

[There's progress on the research of the carbon-based chip!]

...

Chapter 926: So Handsome!

After a week-long “friendly discussions”, the first International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference finally came to an end.

Even though not everyone was happy with the end result, the countries came up with a plan that was acceptable to most people.

At least acceptable to a certain extent...

At the closing ceremony.

NASA Director Carson and the director of the China National Space Administration stood in front of the media cameras and shook hands with each other.

“It was a pleasure meeting you.”

“Yes, same here...”

Director Carson tried to put on a fake smile, but he didn't look happy at all.

There was a warm applause in the crowd.

The media cameras recorded this historic moment.

Lu Zhou was standing by the side, away from most people. He looked at Director Carson's uncomfortable face and felt a little distressed.

“Why do I feel like Director Carson isn't very happy?”

Director Li, who was standing next to him, said, “They had to make a huge compromise on the budget committee negotiations; I'm sure anyone would be unhappy in his position.”

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li and said, "Actually, I'm quite curious about the requests you made."

Over the past week, Lu Zhou was mainly responsible for the technical side.

Precisely speaking, he tried to protect the initial design plan from these horrible improvement suggestions and make sure that the design would be smoothly implemented before the end of the month.

He didn't really pay attention to the political negotiation, but he was curious.

Director Li smiled and said, "We didn't make any requests, we just refused most of their requests."

Lu Zhou looked surprised.

"And they agreed?"

"Sort of, we have the upper hand, so it doesn't matter. We have another meeting next year; hopefully, we'll maintain our advantage." Director Li patted Lu Zhou on the arm and said, "Diplomatic negotiations are about communicating, but it ultimately depends on the country's strength. The reason we can do this is because of our advantage; hopefully, you can help us maintain that advantage."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "You don't have to worry about that."

Director Li solemnly nodded and said, "I'm happy to hear that!"

With the conclusion of the International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference, the construction plan was set in stone. The first batch of the experimental components had been transported to the Jinling launch site. They were going to be transported to outer space via the Skyglow, then transported to the lunar orbit via the Magpie Bridge.

Also, the engineering team responsible for the construction would be sent to the Moon Palace.

On the other hand, the Lunar Hadron Collider Research Center was going to be built in Shanghai.

After hearing this news, Lu Zhou felt emotional.

He always thought that the headquarters of the Lunar Hadron Collider would be in Beijing. However, it seemed like Chen Yushan's prediction was correct—it was indeed in Shanghai.

Chen Yushan told him that the Communist Party of China wanted to promote the Yangtze River Delta economic region.

Having the ILHCRC set in Shanghai was a signal of their intentions.

Beijing was the future of China, while the Yangtze River Delta economic region would become the political, economic, and cultural center of Asia...

A magnificent blueprint appeared in Lu Zhou's mind.

If Chen Yushan's guess was correct, then Lu Zhou should really pay more attention to the project plan...

...

The day after the International Lunar Hadron Collider Conference ended, a line of taxis parked outside the Beijing Shangri-La hotel.

After staying in China for a week, scholars and politicians from all over the world had begun their journeys back to their respective countries.

Academician Zhang Wenlong, chairman of the Chinese Physical Society, stood at the hotel entrance. He spoke in a somewhat emotional tone to Academician Yang Xianfu, principal of the Beijing Institute of Technology.

"I still remember when I went to CERN with my supervisor. I met legendary physicists I read about in textbooks, and I was so excited I couldn't sleep all night.

"I went to the lecture hall the next day. My supervisor told me what one day China will be like this as well. I didn't believe him at the time. But now, it seems like my supervisor was right."

Academician Yang was also filled with emotion as he said, "Yeah, half of the world's best physicists are here in Beijing. This is amazing! Oh yeah, where is Academician Lu?"

Academician Zhang smiled and said, "You're a day late. He packed his things last night and left after the closing ceremony! I bumped into him in the elevator, and he said he had something urgent to attend to in Jinling."

Academician Yang paused for a second and said, "Why did he leave in such a hurry? I wanted to give him a tour of the Beijing Institute of Technology."

Academician Zhang smiled and said, "Haha, you should've told him earlier. Academician Lu is a busy man. I heard that Academician Wang Shicheng was finally able to get him to visit Yan University, but somehow, Academician Lu poached a person during his visit."

Academician Yang was shocked. "How is that possible? Wang Shicheng must be so embarrassed..."

Academician Zhang sighed and said, "Yeah, he is!"

While the two were talking, they suddenly heard a cough.

Academician Zhang Wenlong turned around and saw Academician Wang Shicheng standing right there.

Academician Zhang Wenlong awkwardly smiled and spoke.

"Academician Wang? Nice to see you... Why are you here?"

"... I'm here for the conference."

Wang Shicheng maintained a fake smile and began to chat with the two academicians.

However, no matter what Wang Shicheng talked about, he could tell that the two academicians were acting a little weird.

It was almost like...

They felt sympathetic, almost pitiful.

Wang Shicheng was enraged.

The entire academic community heard about Lu Zhou poaching a talent from his mathematics center. Not to mention that Lu Zhou did it right in front of him.

Wang Shicheng clenched his fist and wanted to skin Lu Zhou alive.

*F*ck sake!*

*That little sh*t!*

The worst thing is that I still have to put on a smile in front of him...

God damnit!

Chapter 927: Carbon-Based Chips!

After Lu Zhou received that email from Professor Wu, even though his body was still in Beijing, his attention was focused on Jinling.

After Lu Zhou delivered the closing ceremony speech at the conference, he immediately went to the airport and took a flight back to Jinling.

As soon as the flight landed, Lu Zhou got in Wang Peng's car and went directly to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

When Lu Zhou walked into the carbon-based semiconductor laboratory, Professor Wu Tianqun and his researchers were working on a piece of laboratory equipment.

When Professor Wu saw Lu Zhou at the door, he paused for a second before asking, "Academician Lu? You're... back from Beijing?"

I just saw this guy on live TV this morning...

"I just came back in a hurry." Lu Zhou looked at the experimental equipment behind him and said, "I'm not interrupting your experiment, right?"

"No, not at all." Professor Wu Tianqun shook his head and said, "The experiment is over, we're just collecting some data."

"Good." Lu Zhou nodded and quickly said, "What about the carbon-based chip?"

Professor Wu Tianqun smiled and spoke.

“The carbon-based chip is in the other laboratory. For safety reasons, I locked it in the sample cabinet. Follow me.”

After delegating some work to his researchers, Professor Wu Tianqun walked out of the laboratory with Lu Zhou and went into another laboratory.

Professor Wu walked up to a sample cabinet and unlocked it with a key. He then put on some gloves and carefully took out a palm-sized brown-tinted glassware from the cabinet.

“Because this is made out of carbon, the chip is sensitive to light. That’s why I kept it inside, do you want to see it?”

As Lu Zhou looked at the thumb-sized chip lying in the brown-tinted glassware, he said, “It’s fine, just tell me how it works.”

“Okay!”

Professor Wu Tianqun cleared his throat and explained the technical side of the chip to Lu Zhou.

A carbon-based chip was obviously a processor that was made of carbon-based transistors. According to Professor Wu Tianqun, this tiny chip contained more than 100,000 carbon nanotubes transistors.

Even though there was still a big gap when compared to silicon chips, which had hundreds of millions of transistors, this carbon chip was already capable of performing simple mathematical operations.

After hearing about this, Lu Zhou felt a wave of excitement.

The carbon-based chip is real!

What does this mean?

This means that Professor Wu Tianqun’s research team has successfully made a breakthrough!

This will have a huge impact on the semiconductor industry cluster!

“... So far, we have been able to achieve a 150nm transistor size. Although the technology is far from being mature, it has already displayed superior computing speed, energy consumption, and heat generation.”

Professor Wu Tianqun paused for a second and continued, “Most importantly, this chip uses the preparation method of ‘chemical vapor deposition + etching’, which is similar to the preparation method of the SG-1 superconducting material. In theory, there is a lot of room for improvement! We are currently looking for ways to further reduce the chip manufacturing process costs and increase the number of transistors per square millimeter.

“If we can achieve more than 30 million transistors per square millimeter and improve the process technology to the size of 10nm, it is entirely possible for this chip to be commercialized! The superiority of carbon-based chips compared to silicon chips is crystal clear!”

Lu Zhou: “How difficult is mass production?”

Professor Wu Tianqun: “It won’t be harder than silicon-based chips! As for the cost, it is more expensive, but the performance makes up for it!”

Lu Zhou said, “Nicely done, Professor Wu!”

Professor Wu Tianqun awkwardly smiled.

“Well, if it weren’t for your two theses in Nature, which provided a theoretical basis, none of this would have happened. Not to mention the SG-1 superconducting material; there was no way we could’ve built a carbon-based chip without the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.”

Lu Zhou smiled and put on a serious face as he said, “As for the research results, I’d like you to write two reports. One without technical details, just a rough summary. The other should be more specific, follow the research thesis format, and write down all of the technical details. That will be used for patent registering.”

After hearing Lu Zhou’s words, Professor Wu nodded seriously.

“Okay, I’ll do this right away, when do you need it?”

Lu Zhou: “No need to rush, just give it to me in a week, or a bit later. Your experiment is still the priority.”

Professor Wu smiled and said, “It’s fine, this won’t interrupt the experiment, I can guarantee I’ll be done in a week.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Thank you then, I'll let you get back to work."

Lu Zhou was about to leave the laboratory when he suddenly remembered something. He turned around and looked at Professor Wu Tianqun.

"Oh yeah, the Communist Party of China is planning on forming an expert group regarding the technical feasibility of topological quantum computing, so I recommended you."

Even though Lu Zhou spoke casually, this was huge news to Professor Wu Tianqun.

Technical feasibility expert group for the Communist Party of China!

Usually, only academicians or academic leaders could enter these types of expert teams, especially since it was led by the Communist Party of China.

Professor Wu was only in the Changjiang Scholars Program. Normally, there would be no chance for him to enter a team like this.

Professor Wu took a deep breath and spoke.

"Thank you!"

This felt kind of weird since Lu Zhou was so much younger than him. However, he was truly grateful.

Being able to enter a group like this would be hugely beneficial for his academic career! Both from a networking perspective, and from a qualification perspective.

Lu Zhou looked at Professor Wu and spoke.

"No need to thank me.

"I didn't do anything. You did this through your own effort and hard work.

"You should thank yourself."

928 An Ethical Scholar

As an ethical scholar, Lu Zhou wasn't a fan of academic monopolies. He believed in an academic environment that was full of freedom.

He liked to find talents that were worth cultivating and devote certain resources to help them grow.

Just like Chen Yang, who he poached from the Yan University mathematics center. It wasn't like he did this out of spite for Academician Wang; it was purely because he saw a promising talent being wasted and abandoned.

Being able to understand the hyperelliptic curve analysis method in such a short amount of time wasn't something that could be done by ordinary scholars. It was a kind of transcendent focus on mathematics.

Being able to focus like this in the chaotic environment of academia was one in a million.

This devotion toward mathematics was something more valuable than talent.

Lu Zhou had a lot to do, so he stopped Professor Wu from thanking him and left the laboratory.

Lu Zhou knew that Professor Wu would do a good job in the expert group, so he wasn't worried.

After he left the carbon-based semiconductor laboratory, he was planning to visit his newly poached talent from Yan University.

However, he suddenly remembered that he forgot to share the good news with others, so he took out his phone and called Ms. CEO.

The phone rang two times and connected.

A pleasant voice traveled through the phone.

"Hi, did you miss me? Why are you calling all of a sudden?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I have some good news to share."

Chen Yushan curiously asked, "What news?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "A carbon-based chip with more than 10,000 carbon-based transistors has been successfully produced by the laboratory!"

The phone went silent for a few seconds.

Chen Yushan took a deep breath.

She spoke in disbelief.

"... Really?!"

"Carbon-based chip?"

"You're not kidding?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Do I sound like I'm kidding?"

Chen Yushan said, "... Where are you now?"

Lu Zhou: "The Institute for Advanced Study. I just came back from Beijing."

"No wonder..."

Chen Yushan sighed and leaned back in her chair. Her voice trembled as she said, "I thought we would have to wait at least another two years to see results. I didn't expect it to be this soon... How long will it take for carbon-based chip technology to mature? A rough estimate."

Lu Zhou contemplated for a while and spoke carefully.

"It's hard to say. So far, we're not sure what the physical limitation of carbon-based chips are and whether or not there are technical bottlenecks. However, we should be able to produce a commercialized chip within a year. Even if the chip is slightly inferior to silicon chips, its superior physical properties will make up for it."

He paused for a second and continued, "I've asked Professor Wu to write some technical and test performance reports, and they should be done in a week. I'm sure he can explain it more clearly. You can just read the report..."

Lu Zhou arrived at the Institute of Mathematics while talking to Chen Yushan.

After some small talk, Lu Zhou hung up the phone and stuffed it in his pocket. He knocked on Chen Yang's office door and went in.

When he walked into the office, a cloud of chalk dust blew into his face.

Lu Zhou fanned the air and couldn't help but ask, "Why don't you open a window?"

Chen Yang turned around from the blackboard and pushed his glasses up his nose.

"... I forgot."

"Go open the windows, or you're going to get pneumoconiosis... Jesus Christ, it might be better for you to work outdoors."

Chen Yang said in a serious tone, "But if it rains outside, I won't be able to work."

Lu Zhou: "..."

Lu Zhou finally sort of understood why this guy was kicked out of his office.

Chen Yang opened some windows and finally introduced some fresh air into the office.

Lu Zhou looked at the calculations on the blackboard and nodded.

"Are you comfortable working here?"

Chen Yang nodded and said, "It's fine, I don't really care as long as I have a blackboard."

"Good, it seems like you're settling in quite well," Lu Zhou said as he began moving backward. He clearly didn't want to stay in this dusty office for one more second. He said, "I just came to see how you were doing... See you around."

Chen Yang quickly said, "Wait a second."

Lu Zhou: "What?"

Chen Yang: "I have a question I want to ask you... Do you have time now?"

A question?

Lu Zhou was intrigued, so he smiled and said, “Depends on what the question is, go ahead.”

“I’m not sure if this will take up too much of your time. In the hyperelliptic curve analysis thesis, you pointed out that rational homotopy theory only applies in intermediate dimensions, so the surgery theory doesn’t hold. I tried proving this myself and was inspired by it...”

Chen Yang picked up a pen and began writing on a blackboard.

[...]

[... When n is greater than 2, the two n -dimensional complex dimensions intersect $X^n(d)$, $X^n(d')$, there exists a differential homeomorphism if and only if their Euler number, total degree, and Pontrjagin class are equal.]

Chen Yang took two steps back and looked at the blackboard. He then said, “If the above holds, we should be able to build a model that converts topological problems to complex analysis problems.”

Lu Zhou looked at the blackboard and raised his eyebrows.

This is an interesting problem.

He had thought about trying to solve Riemann’s hypothesis using partial differential methods, but he never knew where to begin. If a topology problem could be transformed into a complex analysis problem, maybe he could introduce a differential manifold into the hyperelliptic curve analysis, and something magical could happen.

It’s worth a try.

“Does this hold?”

Chen Yang scratched his head. He then shook his head as he said, “I don’t know... I think it’s true, but I don’t know how to prove it.”

“It’s an interesting problem.” Lu Zhou looked at the blackboard and took a picture with his phone. He said to Chen Yang, “I might not be able to give you an answer now, but I’ll do some research and get back to you later.”

Chen Yang nodded and said, "Sure, I'll try to figure it out on my own as well."

Lu Zhou smiled.

"Good, we'll see who solves it first then."

929 It's a Devil

A prison in Southern California.

Mason was pushed into a meeting room by two guards.

The thick metal door closed, and the small room was quiet.

Mason's eyes were a little puffy, his hands were cuffed, and he looked exhausted. He stared at the man across from him.

It was a man in his forties, well dressed in an ironed suit, wearing an expensive-looking watch. He dressed like a successful, upper-class person. However, his calloused hands didn't belong to someone who sat in an air-conditioned office all day.

Mason had a vague idea of what was going on, and he grinned from ear to ear.

"I'm guessing you're not my lawyer."

"A lawyer can't save you, but we can." The man in the suit smiled and extended his hand as he said, "Allow me to introduce myself, I'm Brandon Melsen. I'm your boss now."

Like he had just heard a funny joke, Mason placed his cuffed hands on the table and began chuckling.

After a while, he sat up straight and looked at Melsen.

"I'm afraid you're mistaken. I'm a patriotic person, but that doesn't mean I'll be a slave to the White House."

"We're not the White House, we're the CIA."

Melsen's smile disappeared. He reached forward and stared deadly into Mason's eyes. He then sat back down and said, "The court hasn't decided on a sentence yet, but based on the evidence we collected from your home, even if you hire the best lawyer in California, you're going to spend the rest of your life behind bars."

Melsen paused for a second, and he had an evil smile on his face.

"And Mr. Mason, they're going to love you in there."

Mason nervously frowned and said, "What do you mean?"

Melsen smiled and said, "I'm just saying, they love skinny boys like you."

Mason's face turned white.

Beads of sweat began to roll off his forehead.

Melsen smiled with satisfaction and continued, "You'll have time to consider my proposal before sentencing... Of course, if after spending a few months in prison, you decide you want to make a deal. That offer might be off the table."

Mason hesitated for a while before he spoke.

"What do you want me to do..."

Melsen smiled and said, "The CIA is looking for an expert in information technology. If you help us, you won't be put in a prison with those real criminals. Also, if you do a good job, we can reduce your sentence. You could be a free man in five or six years."

Mason hesitated for a long time.

Melsen looked at his watch.

He only planned on giving Mason ten minutes of time.

Fortunately, it didn't take that long.

After three minutes, Mason spoke.

"I agree..."

“Fantastic, we’re now on the same team.”

Melsen didn’t expect Mason to agree so quickly, but he wasn’t surprised that Mason took the deal.

The CIA agent leaned back on his chair and said, “I can’t get you out of cuffs yet, but I promise you’ll be transferred to another facility in three days.”

Mason was scared, and he nervously asked, “Where are you bringing me?”

“I can’t tell you yet.” Melsen folded his arms and said, “Now, I’m going to ask you questions, and you’re going to answer truthfully. This is part of the deal.”

“Go ahead,” Mason said in a defeated voice, “but I have to remind you that even though I’m the leader of Eagle Hunter, I don’t know the identities of the members.”

Melsen smiled and said, “You mean those buddies of yours? Don’t worry, all of them were arrested within half an hour of your arrest... Let me think... Lone Wolf, Hunter, and Kid... but he was arrested in China.

“Some people are on the run, but it’s only a matter of time before we catch them. We know who they are. Even if we let them loose, the Chinese will never give up. You should just persuade them to surrender themselves. I’m sure they’d rather be caught by us than the Chinese.”

Already...

Been caught?

After hearing Melsen list the IDs, Mason’s face turned white. He began to sweat from his forehead, and his eyes were filled with disbelief.

This is impossible!

I thought that, even though I was caught, the others would escape.

But now this guy is telling me all of them were caught within half an hour?

This meant that, not only did Dr. Z hack my computer and servers, but he was also able to hack the other members of the Eagle Hunter group.

Is this guy... even human?

Melsen stared at Mason's eyes and felt something was wrong, so he said, "You have to tell me everything you know."

Mason muttered to himself, "Devil..."

"Devil?" Melsen frowned and said, "I'd advise you to choose your words carefully."

"He's a devil! He's not human..."

Mason's eyes were bloodshot. He grabbed his head with his cuffed hands and said, "This is not something a human can do, it's impossible!"

Melsen said, "Calm down, speak clearly. We think the person you were hacked by was a cyberwarfare expert. We have three suspects, and we need you to confirm..."

Mason suddenly snorted.

He shook his head and said, "Those guys? They're good, but they're not that good. Mr. Melsen, even the best hacker has to follow the rules of physics. Unless someone has superpowers... Listen, I didn't even get a chance to fight back."

Melsen frowned and said, "So what you're saying is, when the person was hacking you, you were powerless?"

If that's true, then maybe we're underestimating China's cyberwarfare capabilities.

Melson heard the words he least wanted to hear...

"Yes." Mason looked at Melsen with his bloodshot eyes and said, "I didn't stand a chance. When he was hacking me, he was still sending me messages to humiliate me... He's the devil."

"I'm an atheist, I don't believe in those things." Melsen shrugged and said, "Then what username did he use when he communicated with you?"

"Did you not watch the news?"

Mason chuckled and spoke.

“His name is Dr. Z.

“It’s not like you’ll ever find him...”

930 Manifold Problem

“Achoo!”

Lu Zhou was in his Zhongshan International mansion, sitting at his study room desk. He had a pen in his hand.

“Do I have a cold...”

He sniffed and looked at the draft paper in front of him. He gently tapped his pen on the table.

“This is kind of hard.”

[... When n is greater than 2, the two n -dimensional complex dimensions intersect $X^n(d)$, $X^n(d')$, there exists a differential homeomorphism if and only if their Euler number, total degree, and Pontrjagin class are equal.]

Strictly speaking, this was neither a complex analysis problem nor a partial differential equation problem. It was a unique classification of smooth manifolds.

In fact, this was a fairly popular research direction in differential topology. It was mainly about studying the invariant properties of differential manifolds under homeomorphic mapping.

However, the problem was that even though Lu Zhou had researched differential manifolds and topology before, he had had little contact with the mathematical branch of differential topology.

One could make the case that he was completely new to this field.

However, this was expected to happen. After all, Chen Yang was researching the Hodge conjecture, which was completely different from his research on Riemann’s hypothesis.

He was introduced to this problem only because the hyperelliptic curve analysis method could be used to research the Cauchy-Riemann equations...

"This is not my cup of tea... Should I just give up?"

Lu Zhou pondered for a while, then shook his head. He didn't want to give up just yet.

He was the one who proposed a competition against Chen Yang on who could solve this first. Plus, he wasn't a person who would give up.

Even though differential topology wasn't his area of research, with his knowledge of differential manifolds and topology, he was able to pick up some of the core concepts of the field.

Not to mention that his research on Riemann's hypothesis had reached a bottleneck. Instead of trying to move an immovable object, he decided to venture on other paths.

If he could bridge the gap between topology and complex analysis, he might be able to apply the hyperelliptic curve analysis method to the Riemann zeta function...

"Xiao Ai, bring me a cup of coffee, no sugar!"

Xiao Ai: [But Master, instant coffee already has sugar in it? (°—° ")]

"... Shut up, just bring me the coffee."

[Yes, Master! (º ∇ º *)]

The drone left the bookshelf and flew out of the study room.

Lu Zhou placed all of his attention on the draft paper in front of him.

He opened the pen cap with his thumb and began writing.

[Let f_1, \dots, f_r be a homogeneous polynomial of complex coefficients with variables z_0, \dots, z_{n+r} . This set of polynomials defines a complex algebraic cluster X in the complex projective space CP^{n+r} ...

[Let X be a complex complete intersection. If the complex dimension of X is n , then when X is a smooth manifold, a smooth complex complete intersection exists. Set X as a $2n$ -dimensional smooth closed manifold...]

The first step is done.

There was a twinkle of excitement in Lu Zhou's eyes.

He had a slight feeling that he was walking in the right direction.

"Set the smooth closed manifold with dimension $2n$, establish an association on the complex projective space..."

Once he was in the zone, ideas began to flow like a river.

Lines and lines of calculations appeared on the draft paper, and soon, the entire draft paper was filled with numbers and symbols.

Time quickly passed by, and draft papers began to pile up on the table.

Xiao Ai was lying on the bookshelf, quietly observing. Ever since Lu Zhou banned Xiao Ai from using his laptop camera, Xiao Ai could only look through the drone camera.

Even though Xiao Ai didn't like seeing its master working so hard, when it came to creative work like this, there was nothing Xiao Ai could do.

The sun gradually began to set.

Lu Zhou turned on his desk light.

However, he didn't seem to be moving in the right direction.

As the sun in the sky gradually disappeared, his writing began to slow down. Beads of sweat began to drip down Lu Zhou's forehead.

This problem wasn't as easy as he had thought.

The deeper he dived into the problem, the more he realized how complex this maze was.

"Ah... why is it so difficult!"

After being stuck again, Lu Zhou turned into a grumpy old man. He scrunched up his draft paper and threw it in the bin.

“This can’t be! If the proposition is true, there’s no way I can’t find a proof...”

He spun the pen in his hand and stared at the draft paper. He began to mutter to himself, “The strange thing is that I can’t prove the proposition is wrong either... No matter how many parameters I set, the output is correct.”

Lu Zhou sighed and opened his laptop. He logged onto the literature database and typed in a few words.

Rows of research papers appeared in front of him.

Lu Zhou sorted them by the number of citations and selected some of the top-ranking theses.

“There’s no way no one has ever researched this problem before...”

“I should be able to find similar examples.”

Lu Zhou’s eyes suddenly lit up when an interesting thesis title caught his eye.

The author of the thesis was Professor Kreck, an expert in the field of partial differential equations and topology. The thesis was published in Annual Mathematics and had quite a few references.

According to its abstract, the main intent of this paper was to improve surgery theory and to transform the problem of manifold classification into an edge group problem.

Lu Zhou was intrigued. He quickly downloaded the paper and began reading it.

After ten minutes went by, he finally finished reading the thesis. He suddenly spoke with excitement.

“This is it!

“I knew it, there has to be research done on this problem before... At least for a similar problem!

“If I can transform a manifold classification problem into an edge group problem... Jesus, this might be the last missing piece of the puzzle!”

Lu Zhou excitedly stood up from his chair and walked to the paper bin. He quickly pulled out the scrunched up draft paper.

“It’s just a bit wrinkled, should be alright!”

As Lu Zhou flattened the draft paper on his table, his eyes were filled with determination.

“Let’s do this!”

He started to write again.

And this time, he didn’t stop until the sun came up...

931 Sullivan Conjecture

When it came to most mathematical journals, the editors didn’t necessarily have a strong academic background. Their job was mainly to check the format and word count of the paper, then contact peer reviewers and make a decision on the reviewers’ comments.

However, not all journals were like this.

The Annual Mathematics journal, founded by Princeton, had editors-in-chief who were big-name mathematicians.

For example, former editor-in-chief Peter Sarnak was a great scholar in the field of number theory. He was also the 2014 winner of the Wolf Prize.

Professor Frakes was the editor-in-chief after Professor Peter Sarnak. Even though he had a weaker reputation, his strength was unquestionable. If he were still under 40 years old, he might be able to win a Fields Medal using his research results on differential manifolds.

Of course, the reason why Annual Mathematics chose him as the editor-in-chief wasn’t purely because of his academic ability; there were many other factors at play.

Because the research on controllable nuclear fusion was rising in popularity, so was research on plasma physics. Due to the application of the “L-manifold” on solving the Navier-Stokes equations and plasma turbulence problems a few years ago, the research on mathematical fields such as partial differential equations and differentiable manifolds had also seen significant growth in popularity.

Ever since Professor Lu’s Navier-Stokes equations report, there hadn’t been any outstanding results produced in the field of partial differential equations and differential manifolds. It was like Professor Lu stole all of the magic from the fields himself.

Therefore, Professor Frakes was chosen as editor-in-chief of Annual Mathematics, mainly due to his expertise in the partial differential equation and differentiable manifolds.

This was because an editor was normally biased toward theses that were in his own area of research...

Princeton.

Annual Mathematics editorial department.

Professor Frakes already moved into his new office, and he was struggling with the mountain of work in front of him.

Even though most editors-in-chief didn’t take their jobs seriously, Frakes was different. He was at most a decent scholar, especially in a place like Princeton, so he was like an invisible man.

Other people had the luxury of not caring about their editor-in-chief position, but he couldn’t. Therefore, he took this job extra seriously, and he even put his research project on hold.

As he sat in front of a computer, one of his PhD students took a sip of coffee and suddenly stared at the computer screen. The student spoke while choking on coffee.

“... Professor, cough! You have a submission letter in your inbox!”

Professor Frakes was busy with other things, so he casually said, “I’ll take a look when I’m free.”

“But... the author is Lu Zhou.”

Professor Frakes stopped typing and stood up. He quickly walked toward the student's desk.

“Give me the computer!”

“Oh, okay...”

Professor Frakes sat down at the computer and double-checked the email address. After he made sure that Professor Lu was the author, he quickly downloaded the attached thesis.

“Let me see what Professor Lu did this time...”

One of the best perks of being an editor of a well-known journal was being able to read about the latest outstanding research.

Professor Frakes opened the new thesis. He was looking forward to this.

However, when he read the abstract, the excitement in his eyes disappeared. A look of disappointment appeared on his face.

The PhD student said, “What's wrong?”

“It's not a new research result, just a supplement to the hyperelliptic curve analysis method.” Professor Frakes shook his head and said, “He's beating a dead horse, it's not anything outstanding.”

The student said, “... Are we going to reject the submission?”

“No,” Professor Frakes shook his head and said, “if it's an important supplementary result, it should be fine... Just leave this to the reviewers. It at least deserves a peer review... Also, print the thesis, I want to have a look.”

“Okay, professor.”

The printer began to rustle.

Soon the thesis was printed.

Professor Frakes returned to his seat with the warm pages. He drank his coffee while reading the thesis.

Honestly, after reading the abstract, he didn't have any expectations for the thesis.

However, when he got to the third page, he began to mutter to himself.

"... When n is greater than 2, the two n -dimensional complex dimensions intersect $X^n(d)$, $X^n(d')$, there exists a differential homeomorphism if and only if their Euler number, total degree, and Pontrjagin class are equal.

"Where have I seen this before?"

This conjecture seemed oddly familiar.

It was almost like a different version of another conjecture...

Professor Frakes stood up from his chair and wrote some equations on a piece of draft paper.

After writing down two lines, he froze.

"..."

This...

Is this...

Professor Frakes's pupils became larger as he stood up from his seat.

"Sullivan conjecture!"

This conjecture was proposed by Professor Sullivan when he was researching the "classification of the simply connected manifolds with limited uncertainty" and "rational homotopy". It was a conjecture in the field of smooth manifolds.

It was also one of the core problems in differential topology!

People outside of differential topology most likely hadn't heard of this conjecture. After all, this conjecture wasn't particularly significant for people in other mathematical branches.

Due to its difficulty, there were very few people researching this problem. Even Frakes, who was a decent scholar in the field of differential topology, couldn't recognize this problem at first glance.

However, Lu Zhou wasn't in the field of differential topology at all, and being able to produce a result like this was unheard of...

Judging from the citations, it was clear that Professor Lu didn't know that his proposition was another form of the Sullivan conjecture.

Professor Frakes was shocked, and his fingers began to tremble.

The PhD student sitting nearby looked at his supervisor and asked, "What's wrong, professor?"

Frakes ignored his student.

His eyes were locked onto the thesis as he muttered to himself with excitement, "Jesus Christ..."

"We found a piece of treasure!"

932 We Have Decided

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

An office inside the Institute of Mathematics.

Lu Zhou held his breath and walked into the office. He immediately opened the windows and took a breath of fresh air. He then turned around and looked at Chen Yang, who was standing beside the blackboard with a muddled look.

"The question you gave me the other day was interesting."

Lu Zhou coughed. He had a stack of papers in his hand.

"I did some research, and this is what I got... Oh yeah, your proposition was correct. Seems like your mathematical intuition is quite sharp. If this were any more difficult, it could become a classical conjecture."

Chen Yang looked at the blackboard. He then looked at the stack of papers in Lu Zhou's hand. His face was full of surprise.

"You... solved it?"

“Took quite a while, but not too long. I might have pulled an all-nighter...”

Lu Zhou placed the stack of papers on the table and said, “Speaking of which, do you have coffee? Do you mind getting me a cup.”

Chen Yang nodded.

“Ok.”

The cup of coffee was placed on the table.

Lu Zhou looked at the chalk dust on the coffee cup and frowned.

“Can’t you keep up with the times? You don’t like whiteboards, but surely writing on draft paper is the same.”

Chen Yang shook his head and said, “Writing on draft paper is soulless.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Chen Yang quickly said, “Can I read the thesis?”

“... Of course.” Lu Zhou shrugged and took a sip from the dirty coffee cup.
“Go ahead, I came here to talk about this thesis with you.”

“Thank you.”

Chen Yang placed all of his attention on the thesis and left Lu Zhou aside.

While Professor Chen was reading the thesis, Lu Zhou looked at the row of blackboards in the office.

The calculations on the blackboards were clearly his attempts to prove the proposition.

Unfortunately, Chen Yang was still stuck at the entrance of the maze.

Lu Zhou sighed.

He’s talented.

But he’s far from my level.

If I knew this proposition was this difficult for him, I wouldn't have stayed up all night trying to solve it. I'm so sleepy...

Ah, it's a lonely world for a genius like me...

Chen Yang suddenly looked up and spoke.

"Impressive!"

Academician Lu really is a legend!

Professor Lu wrote down proofs of things Chen Yang hadn't even thought of.

Chen Yang had a whole new level of respect for Lu Zhou.

He's too nutty!

Chen Yang was totally impressed.

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "You understand it?"

Chen Yang nodded and said, "Understand... most of it. There are some parts I don't get, can you explain it to me?"

Lu Zhou put down his coffee cup and spoke.

"No problem."

Answering Chen Yang's questions didn't take a lot of effort.

Even though this guy might seem a little silly, he had a sharp intuition for mathematics. Lu Zhou only had to give him some general directions and Chen Yang could easily figure out the rest on his own.

This reminded Lu Zhou of one of his Princeton students—Qin Yue. He was also a taciturn, independent scholar. However, Qin Yue was far from Chen Yang's level.

Honestly speaking, Lu Zhou was a little curious about how Chen Yang survived for this long.

For someone with such a low emotional intelligence, how did he not get beaten up?

After answering Chen Yang's questions, Lu Zhou was almost certain that there was nothing wrong with his thesis.

When Chen Yang looked back at the blackboard, Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something.

"Oh yeah, the problem was quite interesting. It integrated easily into the hyperelliptic curve analysis method... Like you said, this hyperelliptic curve analysis has more applications than I had thought.

"I submitted the thesis to Annual Mathematics, is that fine?"

Chen Yang was a little confused, "Why... wouldn't it be?"

Lu Zhou coughed and spoke.

"I don't really care about another thesis, but it should benefit you quite a lot... However, I was the one who solved it, so I wrote you down as the second author... Is that fine?"

Chen Yang nodded.

"Oh."

Lu Zhou: "..."

How did this guy... survive in academia for so long?

The office became quiet.

Suddenly, the phone in Lu Zhou's pocket began to ring.

"Let me take this."

"Okay." Chen Yang nodded and continued to stare at his blackboard.

Lu Zhou walked out of the dusty office and took a breath of fresh air. He took out his phone and answered the call.

"Hello?"

Director Li's voice traveled through the phone.

“It’s me!”

Director Li?

Lu Zhou knew that the carbon-based chip report hadn’t been written yet, so Director Li should be asking him about something else.

“What?”

Director Li awkwardly smiled and said, “Um, Academician Lu, are you free any time?”

Lu Zhou knew that this guy wanted a favor from him.

It’s way too obvious!

Lu Zhou coughed and said, “Depends on what you’re asking...”

Director Li: “Nothing big. If you have time, take a trip to Shanghai.”

Lu Zhou said, “Why would I go there?”

What the hell is in Shanghai?

Director Li smiled and said, “It’s nearly the end of the month. The headquarters of the ILHCRC is about to be unveiled. You’re the chairman, shouldn’t you go for a visit?”

Lu Zhou: “...?!”

933 Modifications Suggested

The phone went silent for a while.

Lu Zhou was shocked by Director Li’s words, and he took a while to react.

ILHCRC headquarters building...

Unveil?

Didn't we just finish the meeting? How is the building already built? Unless they already started building prior to the meeting... Wait a second!

Lu Zhou suddenly realized something.

That's not even the most important part!

"The hell is chairman? How come I never heard about this?"

Didn't we say I was going to be a chief consultant?

When did it change to the chairman?

Lu Zhou was totally confused; he didn't even know what to say.

"You didn't hear?" Director Li coughed and said, "... I didn't get to tell you because you left Beijing too soon! But—"

"Don't give me buts!" Lu Zhou said, "I want to know what is going on."

Director Li knew that Lu Zhou was unhappy, he said, "Here's the thing, we couldn't wait any longer. This Lunar Hadron Collider project is going to cost US\$20 billion, and there are dozens of countries participating. There has to be a face of the project, right?"

"We didn't want to bother you, and we were just going to find some random academician, but the Communist Party of China felt like the Americans won't be happy with that, not to mention they already took a huge hit on the budget committee. You get what I'm trying to say, right?"

Director Li smiled and said, "You should just power through. Just do this for the first term, and after the term is over, if you're too tired, you can get someone else to replace you."

Director Li didn't know what to say.

If this were anyone else, they would gladly jump at the opportunity of being the chairman of such a huge project. They would immediately go to Shanghai.

After all, that was the headquarters of the International Lunar Hadron Collider!

A project that was going to be more significant than CERN!

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that when the collider on the Moon was completed, the Shanghai headquarters would become the future of theoretical physics. The ILHCRC leader would be the leader of theoretical physics.

Being able to serve as the chairman of such a powerful international scientific research organization was more valuable than winning a Nobel Prize, but Lu Zhou was being so reluctant...

In fact, Director Li didn't want to bother Lu Zhou.

However, the problem was that China had never been particularly good at scientific research, especially when it came to the field of theoretical physics.

Sending an academician might not do the job. After all, there were so many Nobel Prize laureates participating in the project, and they wouldn't respect the academician at all.

More importantly, if the chairman didn't do a good job, it was likely that the foreign scholars would take control of the newly built ILHCRC facility.

Therefore, Lu Zhou was the only candidate for the chairman.

He was the only person who could take this role without anyone questioning his ability.

Academician Zhang Wenlong, president of the Chinese Physical Society, personally wrote a letter recommending Lu Zhou as the chairman.

After all, Lu Zhou's "electrostrong interaction" theory was one of the most outstanding theoretical physics achievements of the century.

Lu Zhou was the only person who could serve as the face of China's physics community...

Lu Zhou could tell that Director Li was being serious, but he was a little flabbergasted.

"That's not the best idea, right? I still have my own research projects..."

Director Li immediately cut off Lu Zhou.

"What do you mean it's not a good idea! We're spending ten billion dollars on this! We can't just let those Americans send someone as the ILHCRC

chairman, right? I don't care, we have to get someone from our side to serve as the chairman!"

Lu Zhou: "..."

Even though Lu Zhou didn't want to serve as the chairman, Director Li's words resonated with him.

All in all, China was investing US\$10 billion on this project, so they couldn't just let someone else control the ILHCRC.

The first few terms of the chairman position had to be served by a Chinese person. They had to take the initiative...

...

Even though Lu Zhou was reluctant, he thought about the big picture and finally agreed to serve as the chairman.

After all, the collider was his idea...

After Lu Zhou got home from the Institute for Advanced Study, he took out his suitcase and began packing the clothes he only recently unpacked from his Beijing trip.

Xiao Ai's drone flew next to him.

Xiao Ai: [Master, are you going on a trip? (｡•́•｡)]

Lu Zhou looked at the drone and spoke.

"Business trip, why?"

Xiao Ai: [Um, Xiao Ai can't fly outdoors, so can you let Xiao Ai use external cameras? Xiao Ai will get very lonely if Xiao Ai can't see Master...]

Jesus Christ, the retardation is back again.

Lu Zhou coughed and said, "I'll... think about it."

Xiao Ai: [Yay! Master, you're the best! (˘ * ˘ *)]

Lu Zhou: "..."

I didn't even agree.

Isn't it a bit too early to celebrate?

Also, that emoticon looks a bit weird...

Another message popped up on the drone screen.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Master, you have mail!]

Lu Zhou: "Open it for me."

Xiao Ai: [Ok! (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥)✧]

An email was displayed on the drone screen.

Lu Zhou began to read the email.

It was sent from the editorial department of Annual Mathematics and signed off by Professor Frakes, the new editor-in-chief.

The professor wrote in a sincere manner.

[Dear Professor Lu, we have received your submission.

[After reading your paper, I was surprised by your research results. There is no doubt that this is a prominent research result. Although I do have a suggestion. I hope you consider it seriously.

[Theorem 1.0 in your manuscript is one of the core propositions in manifold topology and differential topology. Considering the mathematical significance of this proposition, we hope that you can submit the theorem as a separate paper instead of passing it as a corollary for the hyperelliptic curve analysis method. This will ease the process of future scholars citing this paper...

[In summary, I suggest you modify the thesis.]

Lu Zhou: "...?"

934 An Accident?

After being in academia for so many years, this was Lu Zhou's first time hearing an editor recommend him to split his thesis into two parts.

Generally, the authors had the habit of splitting their thesis into two or more parts for publication. They would even cite their own theses to increase the number of references. Oftentimes, the editor would ask the author to compile the theses together.

But here, the editor was asking the author to split the theses into two parts...

This was something that was rarely heard of.

"Theorem 1 is one of the core problems in manifold classification and differential topology..." Lu Zhou stared at the email and rubbed his chin. "Sullivan conjecture? The hell is that, I've never even heard of it."

He threw his suitcase aside and went upstairs.

He sat in front of his computer and began searching the database.

Rows upon rows of theses appeared in front of him.

I had no idea.

This conjecture is actually pretty popular.

I don't recognize any of these people. I guess the Sullivan conjecture isn't connected to other disciplines, but it's still an important problem in its own mathematical branch.

This is just like the twin prime conjecture.

No one outside of additive number theory would study that conjecture.

"... Jesus, no wonder it was so difficult. It took me an entire day! It turns out to be an actual mathematics conjecture?"

Basically, the first seven pages of his Annual Mathematics thesis contained the proof of theorem 1. In fact, this theorem proved the Sullivan conjecture for smooth complex manifolds.

This conjecture was about classifying smooth manifolds, and it had been around for more than half a century.

It was one of the core problems in differential topology!

This meant that he solved a half-century-old differential topology problem without knowing it...

After Lu Zhou finished reading the relevant literature, he felt a little shocked.

He was shocked at how nutty he was, but he was also shocked by Professor Chen.

Somehow, Professor Chen was able to connect the hyperelliptic curve analysis method with a classical conjecture in differential topology.

“Regardless... If the Sullivan conjecture is true, then the hyperelliptic curve analysis method can be applied to differentiable manifolds.

“I feel like I took another step forward to solving Riemann’s hypothesis.

“I just don’t know how many more steps it will take...”

Lu Zhou looked at the computer screen and opened his original thesis. He began reformatting the content.

This part was quite simple. He just had to take out the theorem 1 proof from his original thesis, write a few lines of abstract, and submit it as an independent paper.

Professor Frakes even wrote the thesis title for him.

[Proof of Sullivan’s Conjecture on Smooth Complex Perfect Manifolds]

As for his original thesis, he just had to add a reference to this new thesis.

After ten minutes or so, Lu Zhou sent the reformatted theses to Professor Frakes’ email.

After that, Lu Zhou was about to send an email to Professor Chen Yang. However, he suddenly remembered that he previously uploaded a preprint to arXiv.

Even though he rarely made edits to his manuscript, it was common practice in academia to also change the arXiv preprints when making new modifications.

Lu Zhou logged onto his arXiv account and was about to upload a new version of the thesis. However, he was shocked by the number of downloads.

22,000 downloads!

“Jesus Christ, it’s only been two days! Is there really that many downloads?!”

Normally speaking, a well-written thesis in a popular area of research would have a couple hundred downloads at most.

Theses that had tens of thousands of downloads were theses in popular research fields that had been uploaded a long time ago.

Differential topology wasn’t a popular branch of mathematics at all, especially when it came to manifold classification. There were less than 20,000 scholars in the world in this area of study.

Therefore, the number of downloads was a bit abnormal.

There was only one possibility.

Which was that his thesis caused a commotion in other branches of mathematics.

His thesis was so popular that scholars in other areas of research were curious...

Lu Zhou suddenly realized something, and he immediately logged onto his Mathoverflow account.

Just like he had expected, people on this world-renowned mathematics forum began talking about his thesis on the front page...

[Jesus, did anyone see Professor Lu’s latest work?]

[I just read it, it's just a corollary to the hyperelliptic curve analysis method... What's so special?]

[That's not the main point! Have you read theorem 1! People outside of differential topology might not know this, but this is another form of the Sullivan conjecture!]

[My friend has a master's degree in differential topology, he said that his supervisor was working on differentiable manifold classification. I asked about his opinion, and he said this thesis is the real deal.]

[Professor Lu really is amazing, how does he casually produce such amazing research results.]

[I feel like I wasted my time learning differentiable manifolds...]

[Perfect, I'll use this as a topic for my discussion class tomorrow.]

After reading the forum posts, Lu Zhou sighed.

"These people are so boring."

Why don't they use their time to research something themselves?

It's just some random conjecture...

What's the big deal...

Lu Zhou closed his browser and placed his laptop aside.

Annual Mathematics was going to find a qualified reviewer for the peer-review process.

What he had to do now, was to prepare for his trip to Shanghai...

935 To Shanghai

The last Friday in February.

With a backpack on his back, Lu Zhou embarked on a new journey.

This time, he was going to Shanghai.

According to Director Li, during the beginning of last year, the state conducted a bidding war for the ILHCRC building project.

By the middle of last year, the construction officially began. The main building had already been completed.

Actually, the Communist Party of China had a backup plan. If the international negotiations didn't go well, they would remove the "I" and change the name to LHCRC.

Fortunately, due to the controllable nuclear fusion negotiations and the successful mission of the Mars Rescue team, China's international reputation and image had greatly improved. Thus, the international negotiations went smoothly.

Now that the ILHCRC organization was established, various departments had begun moving into the newly-built building.

As the appointed chairman, Lu Zhou had two things to do in Shanghai. One was to unveil the new headquarters, and the other was to delegate work for various departments.

After all, top physicists and researchers around the world came all the way here to work on the project. Lu Zhou couldn't let that go to waste.

Even though the collider was still in the construction stage, there was still research work to be done. They also had to set some by-laws.

Lu Zhou, who had handled many large-scale scientific research projects before, was more than confident to perform his duties. However, he brought Luo Wenxuan with him just in case.

Because Luo Wenxuan often visited CERN with Witten, he was familiar with CERN's operations. If there was anything Lu Zhou forgot about, he could rely on Luo Wenxuan to help him.

More importantly, Lu Zhou still lacked a successor.

He didn't want to stay as chairman of the ILHCRC for three terms.

Therefore, he planned on giving the role to Luo Wenxuan...

Lu Zhou got in the high-speed rail and sat down in his business class seat. He adjusted the seat to a comfortable angle and took out his laptop. He began working on the PowerPoint slides that he started last night.

This PowerPoint was regarding the various departments' responsibilities and would be presented to the department heads.

The entire physics community had their eyes on Shanghai.

Even though he didn't like doing PowerPoints, considering the fact that this project was going to affect China's physics community, he had to put his head down and bear through it...

He was looking at the PowerPoint slides when he suddenly received two WeChat messages on his phone.

They were from Luo Wenxuan.

[(shocked.jpg)]

[You're already on the train?!]

Lu Zhou looked at the message and replied.

[I'm arriving in an hour, when are you coming?]

Luo Wenxuan: [Tomorrow! I'll come tomorrow! I have some personal stuff to deal with... Just give me a day. Speaking of which, the unveiling ceremony of ILHCRC is in three days, right? Why are you going so early?]

Lu Zhou: [There are also other things to do prior to the unveiling ceremony. I plan on organizing a meeting with all of the department heads... What are you doing?]

Luo Wenxuan: [Uh, something important.]

Luo Wenxuan: [I have to go, see you later!]

Lu Zhou: "..."

Why do I feel like...

This guy isn't the best person to be my successor...

Should I have a backup person?

While Lu Zhou was thinking, Xiao Ai's message popped up on his screen.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Master, can Xiao Ai turn on Luo Wenxuan's laptop webcam? (*´ω´*)]

Lu Zhou immediately said, "No, I told you, don't abuse your powers."

Even though he was curious about what Luo Wenxuan was doing, Lu Zhou didn't want to spy on him.

Xiao Ai: [Oh, okay... (´△｀)]

Lu Zhou: "..."

Why does this thing love hacking into laptop cameras so much?

How did it develop this bad habit?

Lu Zhou felt that, as Xiao Ai's owner, he should take the time and give Xiao Ai a lesson. Otherwise, something bad could happen in the future...

...

After a two-hour train ride, Lu Zhou got off at the Shanghai Hongqiao Railway Station.

When he and Wang Peng walked out of the train station, they saw a black Audi that was parked at the exit.

The driver immediately walked out of the car and helped Wang Peng put the suitcase in the trunk. The driver then gave Wang Peng the keys.

"These are for you."

"Okay."

Wang Peng sat in the driver's seat and looked at Lu Zhou through the rearview mirror.

"Going straight to the hotel?"

“Yeah, sure.”

Wang Peng nodded and set the GPS to the hotel destination.

Lu Zhou sat in the back seat. He closed his eyes and wanted to rest for a while. However, the second he began to doze off, he received a call from his phone.

He picked up the call and heard a joyful voice.

“I looked at your friends’ news feed, you’re in Shanghai?!”

Lu Zhou yawned and could tell it was Chen Yushan.

“Yeah, why?”

Two hours ago, he posted a picture of the train to his friends’ news feed.

Chen Yushan: “What a coincidence! I’m also in Shanghai!”

Lu Zhou said, “You’re here?”

“Yeah, I have to go, but I’ll send you my coordinates. Check your WeChat.”

Before Lu Zhou could respond, the phone call ended. After that, he received a location message from his WeChat.

Coincidentally, he wasn’t far from Chen Yushan’s location. He just had to turn right at the traffic lights and drive two blocks.

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan’s message and sighed. He then spoke to Wang Peng.

“Don’t go to the hotel.”

Wang Peng said, “Then where?”

Lu Zhou: “I sent the location to your phone, I think it’s a coffee shop... It’s not far from here.”

“Okay.”

Wang Peng nodded without asking why. He merely turned the steering wheel and began to drive toward the new destination...

936 Coincidence

A well-decorated cafe was sitting on the corner of a commercial street.

Judging from the decoration and the colored chalkboard at the entrance of the cafe, the owner was likely a hipster. There weren't a lot of people in the cafe.

Lu Zhou pushed open the glass door and walked in. He saw Chen Yushan sitting by the window waving at him.

Her appearance hadn't changed since Chinese New Year. She was wearing a beige coat, a white sweater, and knee-high black boots.

Chen Yushan wasn't the only person there.

Lu Zhou saw an unexpected acquaintance sitting next to her.

"Long time no see, Academician Lu." The woman sitting next to Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Thanks for taking care of my daughter."

"Mrs. Yang, you're too kind." Even though he was surprised to see Mrs. Yang here, Lu Zhou tried to act unfazed. He politely smiled and said, "Academician sounds too formal, just call me Professor Lu."

This woman was none other than Mrs. Yang Danqi, the mother of Lu Zhou's former student.

Seven years ago, Lu Zhou was still worrying about his living expenses and tuition fees. This woman helped him a ton. They barely kept in touch after he went to study at Princeton and Han Mengqi graduated from high school.

He didn't expect to see her today.

Chen Yushan smirked and spoke.

"Okay okay, enough small talk, it's not our first time having coffee together. What do you want to drink? I already ordered."

Lu Zhou: "Mocha, please."

Chen Yushan raised her arm.

"Waiter, a mocha, please."

When Lu Zhou didn't have access to instant coffee, a cup of mocha was his second choice.

The creamy chocolate masked the bitterness of the coffee, making it more palatable for him.

Lu Zhou took a sip of his mocha.

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou curiously and finally asked, "Why are you in Shanghai?"

"I have some stuff to do at the ILHCRC. I didn't want to come, but they made me." Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan and said, "What about you? I didn't know you were in Shanghai."

Chen Yushan pouted and said, "Wow, I knew you never cared about me. You don't even look at my posts on WeChat."

Lu Zhou: "..."

What do you mean?

Do you know how busy I am, who has the time to look at your posts...

Seeing Lu Zhou speechless, Chen Yushan sighed and said, "Okay, whatever, remember that plan I told you about last time?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yeah... Is this related to that?"

"Sort of," Chen Yushan said. Because her auntie was here, she didn't elaborate on the details. She briefly said, "Basically, the state wants to invest capital in high-tech industries. There's a high-tech innovation and investment summit happening in Shanghai. It's quite big, and a lot of Chinese and Asian companies are attending."

"I received an invitation from GAZE—General Association of Zhejiang Entrepreneurs—so I came here as a representative of Star Sky Technology."

High-tech innovation and investment summit?

Sounds interesting, I wonder what it's about.

Lu Zhou looked at Mrs. Yang and spoke.

"Mrs. Yang, are you going as well?"

Yang Danqi nodded and said, "I'm an old member of GAZE, so I received an invitation as well. Even though my business has little to do with technology, I'm taking this as an opportunity to catch up with Chen Yushan."

Chen Yushan smiled and said, "What do you think? Do you want to come check it out? It's quite interesting."

"I'm good." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I don't even have an invite, so it's not a good look if I do."

Yang Danqi smiled and said, "Professor Lu, you must be kidding, you don't need an invitation."

Chen Yushan nodded and said, "Yeah, yeah, if you want to go, I can get you an invitation right now."

Lu Zhou looked at Chen Yushan and didn't know how to respond, so he shrugged and spoke.

"If I'm available... I can go."

"So, it's settled then." Chen Yushan smiled and said, "Which hotel are you staying at? I'll go find you, we'll go together!"

Mrs. Yang elbowed Chen Yushan and said, "Hey, you're just going to ditch your auntie like that?"

Chen Yushan awkwardly said, "We can go together, I didn't say I'm ditching you. We'll go pick up Lu Zhou together..."

Mrs. Yang smiled and shook her head.

"Okay, okay, you millennials can do your thing, I won't third wheel you two. I'll just go catch up with some of my old friends."

“Auntie, you’re the best!”

“Okay, okay, fine.”

Chen Yushan was grabbing Mrs. Yang’s arm while giggling. Judging from Mrs. Yang’s smile, she seemed quite fond of Chen Yushan.

Lu Zhou didn’t know what to say.

This chick...

I didn’t say I was going to go...

What if I’m busy that day?

But...

This high tech summit does sound interesting.

Lu Zhou had been to many academic conferences, and he wondered what the capital investment conferences were like.

If he didn’t have to do anything himself, he was quite interested in going and watching on the sidelines.

Lu Zhou made up his mind.

If I’m not busy, I’ll try to go...

While Chen Yushan was excitedly telling Lu Zhou about what this summit was about, a silver plane all the way across the Pacific Ocean landed at the airport in New York.

Xiao Tong got off the plane with her suitcase and headed toward the place her brother once worked and studied at...

937 Welcoming Princeton

Princeton dorms.

A silver car appeared around the corner and parked at the entrance.

Qin Yue turned off the engine and spoke.

“We’re here.”

Xiao Tong unfastened her seat belt and politely said, “Thank you for picking me up.”

Qin Yue smiled and said, “You’re welcome, do you need help with your luggage?”

When Qin Yue was studying in Princeton, Lu Zhou helped him with a ton of things. Now was finally his chance to return the favor.

However, just like her brother, Xiao Tong didn’t like to receive help from others. Xiao Tong immediately and euphemistically declined Qin Yue’s offer.

“No, thanks, I got it.”

Qin Yue nodded and said, “Okay then, if you need anything, call me.”

“Okay, see you later.”

“Take care.”

After saying goodbye to Qin Yue, Xiao Tong went to the dorm reception and collected her keys. She then dragged all of her stuff upstairs.

She applied for the student accommodation online, and this place was well furnished and ready to go.

After Xiao Tong went into her room, she spent two hours unpacking and tidying. She then took her documents and went to Nassau Hall, which was Princeton’s administrative building.

This actually wasn’t her first time in Princeton.

A few years ago, she came here for two months after graduating high school. After her vacation was over, she went back and began studying at Jin University.

Back then, her brother was still a Princeton professor. She even remembered his cute, softly spoken assistant.

However, the assistant was too shy, and despite Xiao Tong's attempts at talking to her, they didn't become friends.

"I wonder if she's still here."

After Xiao Tong left the admission office, she returned to her apartment. She lay on her bed and stretched.

"If only I can find her and make friends with her... But then again, she probably doesn't recognize me, right? It's been so many years."

Xiao Tong had had a long day, so it wasn't long before she began snoring.

After traveling for so long, she could finally get a good night's sleep.

She slept peacefully until seven o'clock the next morning. She then yawned and crawled out of bed...

Xiao Tong then looked at her calendar on her phone before going to the bathroom to freshen up. After that, she opened her computer and sent an email to her future supervisor, Professor Krugman.

While she was still preparing breakfast, she received an email.

"Did he already respond?"

She thought that it would take a few days for her supervisor to respond; she didn't expect him to reply within an hour.

The email was short. Basically, Krugman thanked her for choosing Princeton and told her to report to his office when she was ready to begin her PhD studies.

His office address was also included in the email.

She contemplated on whether or not she should wait a few days and settle in before reporting to his office. However, she thought that it would be better for her to go now and leave a good first impression.

Therefore, she quickly finished her breakfast, put on some fresh clothes, and headed out.

Because of her good sense of direction, she easily found Professor Krugman's office in the economics building.

When she entered the door, a sonorous voice came from the office, which nearly scared her off.

"Welcome to Princeton! Are you settling in well?"

Xiao Tong took half a step back and made sure it was indeed Professor Krugman she was talking to. She composed herself and spoke.

"I lived here for a month before, and it's not my first time studying abroad, so I'm quite used to it."

Professor Krugman curiously asked, "Lived for a month? I thought you went to Jin Ling University for your undergrad and Oxford for your master's... Was it for an exchange?"

"Um, not quite... More like visiting a relative?" Xiao Tong said. She didn't expect her supervisor to know this much about her, so she was a little shocked.

"Oh." Krugman smiled and said, "Then I won't have to worry about you getting lost on campus. There's no distinct obvious boundary between the town and the campus, so it's easy to get lost... Wisl, help this student settle in. I have a phone call to make."

"Okay, professor," Wisl said. Wisl was a PhD student with freckles, and he wore a pair of thick-framed glasses. He looked at Xiao Tong and said, "I'm Wisl, a PhD student, nice to meet you."

"... Nice to meet you, I'm Lu Xiao Tong."

Wisl politely shook her hand and spoke.

"Lu Xiao Tong? Come with me."

Wisl brought Xiao Tong to an empty desk by the window, where he said, "This is where you will work. If you have any questions, ask me or Krugman... Or anyone else in the office. We will try to help you, but you'll be on your own for the most part."

Xiao Tong: "Thanks..."

"You should be thanking me. I got off work yesterday when Krugman called me and told me to clean up the empty desk." Wisl shrugged and said, "Normally, the new student would be the one cleaning up the desk... but Krugman seems to have more respect for you."

Xiao Tong awkwardly said, "I could've done it myself."

"It's fine, it doesn't matter," Wisl said nonchalantly. "I'll introduce you to the others in the office."

"Okay..."

Wisl was about to introduce the new student to the other people in the office when Krugman walked into the office with a smile.

"The call is over! I'll handle this, Wisl, you can do your work."

"Oh... okay," Wisl said. He was a little confused why the professor was so enthusiastic, but he still nodded and said, "I'll go work on my thesis... I'll introduce you to them later."

"Okay, thanks."

Xiao Tong nodded and looked at Krugman, who had a warm smile on his face.

Is Princeton always this welcoming?

How come I never heard my brother talk about this...

Professor Krugman walked toward Xiao Tong with a smile and gently spoke.

"I've read your graduation thesis many times. It was well written. Even though there are some flaws, being able to write a thesis like that at your age is impressive. Such talents are rare even in a place like Princeton."

He coughed and spoke.

"Since you have a certain amount of theoretical knowledge, I'll try to cultivate your other abilities... Speaking of which, Xiao Tong, have you attended academic conferences before?"

Xiao Tong: "I went with my supervisor..."

Krugman rubbed his chin and asked, “Was it a good conference?”

Xiao Tong said embarrassedly, “Not really...”

Unfortunately, her previous supervisor, Professor Forster, wasn’t a big name in the field of macroeconomics. Forster didn’t give her a lot of opportunities in the academic world. Instead, Xiao Tong was given internships at major investment banks.

Back then, Xiao Tong didn’t know if she wanted to continue in the path of academia, so she didn’t pay attention to the conferences. She only went to some conferences with her supervisor.

“Perfect then!”

Krugman’s eyes lit up as if he had thought of a brilliant idea. He said, “There’s a macroeconomics conference in Shanghai next week. Attending academic conferences is part of academia, and just listening to the reports will be beneficial. There are many scholars and PhD students attending. If you haven’t experienced something like this before, I’ll take you.”

Xiao Tong noticed that Wisl, as well as the other students in the office, looked at her with jealousy in their eyes.

As a Nobel Prize scholar, Krugman rarely attended conferences with students, unless this student was doing a report at the conference.

But now...

Xiao Tong had been in this office for less than an hour, and she was already receiving “VIP” treatment...

I’m so jealous!

Xiao Tong was a little uncomfortable with everyone looking at her.

“But... I’m not prepared, maybe you should bring someone else.”

“It’s fine! You don’t have to prepare for anything,” Professor Krugman said. “One day, you’ll publish a thesis at a top-level conference, so you should familiarize yourself with the process. It will greatly benefit you in the future.”

Xiao Tong couldn’t find an excuse to refuse the invitation.

She obviously didn't want to miss this opportunity.

However, she just flew here from Shanghai, and now she had to fly back with her supervisor...

When Xiao Tong thought about the 20-hour flight, she started to have a headache...

938 Want to Drink? It's on Me

Nine o'clock at night, Beijing time.

Sheraton hotel, presidential suite.

Lu Zhou stood next to the floor-to-ceiling windows. He was on a call with someone from the other side of the Pacific Ocean.

"I dropped your sister off at her apartment."

"Oh, okay, thanks."

"No worries." Qin Yue smiled and said, "Oh yeah, she's living in a student apartment right now... Should I just let her move into your house? I can rent a smaller apartment near campus anyway."

When Lu Zhou left Princeton, he gave Qin Yue the keys to his house and his Ford Mustang. All Qin Yue had to do was pay the property tax every year.

After all, he needed someone to take care of the house. Because Princeton was in the state of New Jersey, if there wasn't someone looking after the house during winter, it was very likely for a frozen pipe to burst, thus damaging the house.

Lu Zhou had quite fond memories of the fireplace in his own Princeton home.

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "It's fine, I asked her about this during New Year, and she refused without even thinking about it. But then again, I won't feel safe letting a girl live in a suburban house by herself. If you don't want to live there, just ask Vera or the other professors."

Lu Zhou knew why Xiao Tong refused his offer.

On one hand, she was grateful toward her brother for taking care of her, but she also had a similar personality trait to Lu Zhou, which was that she never liked to receive favors from other people. She wanted to be independent and didn't want to cause any trouble for other people. She didn't want to be a burden to others...

Lu Zhou wanted to tell her that she wasn't a burden.

After all, she was family.

And families were supposed to help one another...

Qin Yue smiled and said, "I didn't say I don't want to live here anymore. With only US\$3,000 a year for such a big house, this is probably the cheapest rent in America. I'm just saying, if your sister needs it, I can move out. But you're right. It's not safe for a girl to live off-campus alone."

Even though the student apartments in Princeton were expensive, it was close to campus and had good security. Qin Yue remembered that Xiao Tong's apartment was a two-bedroom. Having a roommate would help her integrate into campus life easier.

After asking some questions about his sister, Lu Zhou changed the subject and casually chatted with his former student.

"How are you doing?"

Qin Yue smiled and said, "I'm doing good, and I'm quite accustomed to life here. All I need is a quiet place to research. The only downside is that you're not here anymore, so I can't ask you for help now."

Lu Zhou: "You're a professor now, you should be the one helping others. Speaking of which, what are you researching these days?"

"Waring's conjecture in additive number theory..." Qin Yue sighed and said, "I hate this problem! I finally realize why there are so few people researching number theory. Most of the time, you think a problem is a number theory problem, then you dive deep into it, and it turns out to be an algebraic geometry problem. Then, you realize that algebraic geometry methods can't

solve the problem, so you try to use representation theory, p-adic theory... and of course, your Group Structure Method."

"That's a good thing." Lu Zhou smiled and said, "That's how mathematics progresses. By connecting fields together."

Qin Yue said, "You're right, but as a researcher, this is not fun at all. Sometimes, I wish there was a tool that could tell us what method to use."

Lu Zhou: "I don't think that's possible."

Qin Yue: "Probably."

The conversation suddenly stopped.

Qin Yue felt like Lu Zhou had something to say. However, Lu Zhou was beating around the bush.

Lu Zhou suddenly spoke.

"Is Vera... doing okay?"

Qin Yue sighed and spoke.

"I asked around for you, but I didn't find anything useful. She doesn't want to talk about her condition. She tries to hide from me. I asked Molina, but she didn't want to tell me anything either."

Lu Zhou went silent for a second.

"Okay, thanks..."

He paused for a second and continued, "If she doesn't want to talk, don't force her."

Qin Yue: "I'll talk to you later then?"

"Yeah..." Lu Zhou looked at the clock on the wall and said, "It's getting late here."

Qin Yue hesitated for a bit and said, "Can I ask you a question, I've always wanted to ask this before, it's—"

Lu Zhou: "If it's an academic problem, go ahead..."

Qin Yue sighed and said, "Nevermind then..."

...

Wang Peng was in the room next door, and he had just finished shaving his beard. He sat on the edge of his bed while inspecting his equipment in his suitcase.

Suddenly, he heard footsteps outside his door.

He could tell who it was from the footsteps, so he stood up and opened the door.

"What's up?"

Lu Zhou spoke.

"Want to drink? It's on me."

Wang Peng went silent for a few seconds and said, "I can't drink or smoke on the job, but if you want to drink, I can accompany you."

"What do you mean by that?"

Wang Peng said, "I'll sit on the side and carry you back when you're wasted."

Lu Zhou smiled and shook his head.

"Me? Wasted? Forget about it..."

Lu Zhou turned around and walked toward the elevator. Wang Peng closed the door and followed him. When they got in the elevator, Wang Peng pressed the floor the bar was on.

Lu Zhou looked at him and didn't say anything.

He then walked up to the bar and sat on a stool. He looked at the bartender and spoke.

"Whiskey on the rocks."

“Coming right up.”

Wang Peng looked at the bartender preparing the drink and had a feeling Lu Zhou was going to drink a lot tonight.

“The unveiling ceremony is tomorrow, I suggest you take it easy tonight.”

Lu Zhou, who normally listened to Wang Peng’s advice, gave a surprising answer.

“Cool.”

Lu Zhou took the glass from the bartender and began drinking one glass after another...

Lu Zhou didn’t remember when he stopped drinking.

When he came back to life, it was already the next morning...

939 Unveiling Ceremony!

Lu Zhou had a great time last night.

But waking up in the morning was painful.

The next day, Lu Zhou woke up with a headache from his hangover. Thanks to his strong metabolic function, he felt a little better after taking a shower. He went downstairs and ate some breakfast, then got in the car waiting for him at the hotel entrance.

Lu Zhou sat in the back seat and pinched his forehead.

“What time did I drink until yesterday?”

Wang Peng said, “Early morning... I didn’t expect you to wake up this morning.”

Lu Zhou: “Nothing but a couple of shots, no big deal.”

Wang Peng smiled and said, “... Where to?”

Lu Zhou: "ILHCRC headquarters."

"Okay."

Wang Peng skillfully turned the steering wheel and began driving.

Lu Zhou was leaning against the window. He planned on taking a nap but suddenly remembered how drunk he was last night.

"I drank too much last night, whatever you heard me say, pretend like I didn't say anything."

"It's fine, we all have our bad days." Wang Peng smiled and said, "Do you feel better? Are you ready for the unveiling ceremony?"

Lu Zhou smiled confidently.

"Of course I'm ready.

"This is nothing but a small event.."

...

Actually, it was quite a big event.

Media vans gathered in the parking lot of the magnificent ILHCRC headquarters building, which was situated in the high-tech zone. The entire world had their eyes set on this ceremony.

The crowd surrounded the front entrance of the building. A giant granite stone wrapped in red cloth, which was around five meters high, sat at the entrance of the building.

There were no red carpets, no balloons in the sky, no fireworks. However, no one looked down on the significance of this ceremony.

Scholars concerned about the future of mankind, laymen interested in physics, and politicians concerned about the impact of this project were paying close attention to this ceremony.

Some of them were sitting in front of a TV, others were live at the scene. They all couldn't help but hold their breath.

A man in a suit stood in the center of attention.

He didn't have a script in his hand, only a microphone.

He spoke in a clear and solemn voice.

"First of all, I'd like to thank the scientists, scholars, politicians, and everyone else watching at home for celebrating this glorious moment with us.

"As the chairman of the ILHCRC, I'd like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart!"

The crowd gave a wave of applause.

Lu Zhou nodded and cleared his throat.

"ILHCRC is an international physics research organization, and we are committed to solving problems that will impact our future.

"This project will help us understand the laws of the universe in which we live in.

"I'm honored to stand here and unveil this glorious building!"

Lu Zhou took two steps back and walked toward the granite stone.

He reached out and yanked off the red cloth.

A magnificent line of words was engraved in the stone.

[International Lunar Hadron Collider Research Center]

It was almost like time was frozen.

Then...

The applause and cheers began...

The researchers of the Institute of Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences excitedly waved their arms, and they even hugged each other with tears in their eyes.

They were going to change history!

They were going to achieve something great together!

This kind of glory overshadowed all personal honors, even the honor of a Nobel Prize. At that moment, they were all in this together, as a team.

Luo Wenxuan was being squished in the crowd, and he nearly dropped his glasses.

Academician Zhang Wenlong, the chairman of the Chinese Physical Society, clapped until his palms began to hurt.

“Finally.”

“Yeah,” said Fang Shaoping, the director of the Institute of Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He rubbed his eyes and said, “This is a new page for the Chinese physics field.”

Academician Zhang Wenlong chuckled.

“Not just the Chinese physics field!

“This is a new page for the world of physics!”

...

The unveiling ceremony was over.

Lu Zhou gently bowed and put down the microphone. A swarm of reporters came forward and extended their microphones.

“Professor Lu, I’m a reporter from Columbia TV, can you tell us why people think the hadron collider is a waste of money?”

Lu Zhou: “I think those people should educate themselves.”

“I’m a BBC reporter! I’d like to ask if the ILHCRC chairman position was determined by a vote? Did the ILHCRC consult other nation members on this decision?”

Lu Zhou: “No comment.”

With a group of security personnel escorting him, Lu Zhou finally escaped the reporters. Lu Zhou and other ILHCRC staff swiped their gate cards and went into the building.

Suddenly, he saw a glimpse of someone familiar in the crowd.

When the guy noticed Lu Zhou looking at him, he tried to slip away, but Lu Zhou yelled, "Luo Wenxuan!"

"I was looking for you during the opening ceremony; you're finally here."

940 Delicious!

Since Luo Wenxuan's cover was blown, there was no point in hiding.

Luo Wenxuan awkwardly looked at Lu Zhou and scratched his head.

He felt quite embarrassed about getting caught like this.

He smiled and tried to change the subject.

"What a coincidence, the weather is so nice today, thank god it hasn't rained. There's not a single cloud in the sky. If it were raining, everyone holding their umbrellas would—"

Lu Zhou: "Don't change the subject, where were you?"

Luo Wenxuan coughed and said, "The train was late, then there was a traffic jam..."

"You took the train this morning?" Lu Zhou said, "You just couldn't come to Shanghai a day early? Did you have to wait until the last minute?"

Luo Wenxuan awkwardly scratched his head and said, "Um... I didn't miss out on anything important, right?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Nothing important."

Luo Wenxuan patted his chest and sighed in relief.

"Oh, thank god!"

“Thank god my ass!” Lu Zhou said, “There’s a press conference at two in the afternoon, and I want you to speak there. Go speak with the PR team, learn what you can say and cannot say to the public.”

When Luo Wenxuan heard about the press conference, he jumped up like a bunny and said, “Wait a second! Why am I speaking at the press conference, I’m not—”

Lu Zhou: “Shut up, you should have come here yesterday. You missed out on the department meeting and was late for the unveiling ceremony. This is your punishment.”

“No, please,” Luo Wenxuan said. “Please forgive me, those reporters are monsters...”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I can’t, you have to do it. Also, you’re part of the reason for the ILHCRC, and you have a good understanding of the Lunar Hadron Collider design. I’m sure you can answer some questions. Think of it as a chance to brag.”

Luo Wenxuan said, “What do you mean brag... How about I do the report for your next big research paper. Also, how am I part of the reason for the ILHCRC? It’s not like CERN is begging to work with me.”

“Enough,” Lu Zhou said. “If you can’t do this tiny press conference, why would I let you give a report on my research result?”

Lu Zhou walked up and patted him on the shoulder.

“You got this!

“Just think of it as a public speaking exercise!”

For some reason, Luo Wenxuan felt like there was something troublesome waiting for him.

This seems a little suspicious.

It’s not like I can ask him.

After a while, he sighed and patted Lu Zhou’s hand.

“Okay then.

“I guess I have to do it.

“I’ll go prepare.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Motherf*cker, why do I want to punch this guy in the face?!

I’m training him to be my successor, yet he’s making it seems like I’m torturing him.

He should be thankful!

Maybe I should get a backup to replace him...

...

Shanghai international airport.

Professor Krugman walked through the crowd with a suitcase in his hand and a hat on his head. He handed his suitcase to the PhD student next to him.

“Wisl, carry this for me!”

Wisl took the suitcase and spoke.

“Okay, professor!”

Professor Angus looked at the crowded airport lobby and said to Krugman, “Jesus, there’s so many people here! It wasn’t like this ten years ago.”

People of all races were crowded inside the airport.

Professor Angus felt like he was in New York.

Professor Krugman smiled and spoke.

“My friend, the world is constantly changing. If you stay in Princeton for the rest of your life, the world is going to leave you behind... Wisl, how about you be a gentleman and carry the lady’s luggage?”

Wisl looked at the professor; he was speechless. He quietly went over and tried to grab Xiao Tong’s suitcase.

Xiao Tong held on tight to her suitcase and awkwardly spoke.

“... I can carry it myself.”

Even though Xiao Tong euphemistically refused Wisl’s offer, Wisl still had an angry look on his face.

This old man is using me as a slave!

I knew this was going to happen, but this is so humiliating!

However, his anger quickly disappeared.

When he thought about being able to attend an academic conference with a Nobel Prize laureate and being able to meet the big names of the industry, his anger soon dissipated.

This is nothing!

This will benefit me in the future!

Wisl was no longer jealous of his supervisor’s bias toward the new Chinese student. He even felt his shoulders becoming stronger...

I got this!

Xiao Tong didn’t notice Wisl’s emotions. Instead, she was too busy being confused about Professor Krugman’s actions.

Are all Princeton professors this kind?

It wasn’t like this when I was in Oxford...

“... By the way, Xiao Tong, aren’t you going to call your family and tell them you’ve arrived safely?”

Xiao Tong replied, “I just called them a few days ago...”

Professor Krugman said in a serious manner, “I know, but you flew again, right? It was a twenty-hour flight! Your family must be worried.”

Xiao Tong: “...”

They won't be worried if I don't tell them.

Xiao Tong didn't know what to say.

"I'll call them at the hotel..."

Professor Krugman smiled and said, "Okay! Call them at the hotel... Don't forget."

Xiao Tong nodded awkwardly.

"Okay..."

There's no way I'm calling them. I'm not telling them I'm in Shanghai again.

If my brother knew that I went all the way to Princeton for a whole two days then came back, he would laugh his ass off.

Xiao Tong felt a little weird about Professor Krugman's actions.

"Too bad my brother is in Jinling. He won't be able to see him..."

Xiao Tong shook her head and walked next to her supervisor. She dragged her suitcase on the ground while walking toward the taxi stand...

941 Most Creative Poster

After making Luo Wenxuan take over the afternoon press conference, Lu Zhou realized how much more free time he had.

He sat in his hotel room and thought about what to do to kill time. He suddenly remembered that there was an invitation letter he had yet to respond to.

He remembered the words Professor Krugman said in the email. He hesitated for a while and finally sighed.

"Whatever, I have time to kill anyway, I'll just go check it out."

He was actually quite curious if the Lu Bewley model was as nutty as Krugman said it was.

The location for the conference was at a five-star hotel, and the invitation also included dinner and lunch vouchers. Even though Lu Zhou wasn't interested in economics, he was interested in free food.

Lu Zhou got up and changed into his casual clothes. He called Wang Peng and asked him to get the car ready downstairs. He then took the elevator down and went outside.

Lu Zhou said, "Xinrui Hotel... A five-star hotel that was built recently. It's quite far though."

Lu Zhou was sitting in the backseat as he took out the invitation letter and read the address to Wang Peng.

Wang Peng reached out and tapped on the GPS navigation screen.

"Xinrui Hotel? It doesn't seem to be that far, only a thirty-minute drive."

Lu Zhou's eyes felt droopy as he said, "I'm not in a hurry."

"Is this another meeting?"

"Kind of, but I'm mainly going there for the food."

"Okay then..."

...

Just like Wang Peng had estimated, after a thirty-minute drive, they arrived at the entrance of the Xinrui Hotel.

The worker standing at the entrance of the hotel took a look at Lu Zhou's invitation letter. He then invited the two into the hotel.

Lu Zhou walked through the hotel lobby and looked at the decor and the people in the lobby.

He realized there wasn't a single tourist here.

No wonder academia costs so much money, these economists are so extravagant with their conferences.

Not only is this a five-star hotel, but they seemed to have rented out the whole place for the conference.

Mathematics conferences, on the other hand, were often hosted in small meeting rooms. Even top conferences such as the ICM wouldn't be hosted in such a luxurious venue.

Lu Zhou still remembered the last International Congress of Mathematicians conference in Rio de Janeiro. Even though the hotel wasn't horrible, it was nowhere near a five-star resort.

No wonder mathematicians look down on economists. These economists use mathematical tools to create theories and attend these extravagant conferences!

Lu Zhou speculated that the reason this venue was held in such an extravagant place was that the conference organizer was sponsored by famous universities such as Aurora University and Kai University.

The local government and universities were happy to spend money to attract international scholars.

Just like the saying goes.

He who pays the piper calls the tune.

If this were before, international scholars would never come to a domestic conference like this.

But the academia environment had changed since then.

With the rise of China's economy, more and more scholars and economists had become interested in China's economic models. They were willing to research existing problems in the Chinese economy, as well as study what kind of impact China's economy would have on the world...

From an objective point of view, being able to attract international scholars was a good thing.

After Lu Zhou went into the venue, he immediately went to the souvenirs booth and happily collected some free notebooks and pens from large investment banks.

These pens were not available for purchase, and rarely would people sell them. Thus, they were quite a collectible item.

Lu Zhou had always had the habit of collecting gifts from academic conferences. For him, this was a way of tracking his academic progress.

He hadn't been attending as many conferences over the past few years.

Holding the free metal pen made Lu Zhou feel nostalgic.

Next to the souvenirs booth was the poster booth area.

Just like mathematics conferences, advanced topics were discussed in conference halls, while the poster area gave a chance for all scholars to show off their results.

Compared to giving a talk or a report, the barrier of entry for a poster booth was much lower. It was like a street vendor setting up shop next to a high-end mall. Most of the people here were master's and PhD students. Anyone with a loud voice and an eye-catching poster would receive quite a lot of attention.

Even though an academic poster was inferior to other academic communication methods, this was still a very useful way to show off one's work.

Lu Zhou looked around the dazzling poster stalls. He realized that even though he recognized the individual words and symbols on the posters, he didn't understand what the poster was actually trying to say.

He was starting to get confused when he suddenly noticed a familiar-looking headline on a poster.

"... Lu Bewley model?"

Even though the poster was poorly done, the title was written there clearly.

A tall, skinny man standing in front of the poster noticed Lu Zhou, and he raised his eyebrows and asked, "You're in this research area?"

Lu Zhou heard the young man and smiled.

"Sort of."

“What a coincidence.” The young man smiled and reached out his hand as he said, “I’m Wisl, PhD student at Princeton, researching macroeconomics... More specifically, I’m researching economics models that are built using mathematical models. The Lu Bewley model is my research project!”

He had been standing here with his poster since the morning, but no one was interested in his poster.

He finally found someone who seemed to be interested in his poster, so he didn’t want Lu Zhou to leave.

However, Lu Zhou didn’t plan on leaving anyway.

The reason why he attended this conference was to find out if the Lu Bewley model was as significant as Krugman had claimed.

“Is the Lu Bewley model important?”

Even though Lu Zhou felt a little narcissistic asking this question, he couldn’t help but feel curious.

Lu Zhou was embarrassed to ask this question, but Wisl took that as Lu Zhou doubting the importance of this model. He stood up straight and began to explain.

“Of course! It’s one of the most important economics models in recent years! You’re in this research area, you should know about the Bewley model, right? The Lu Bewley model is a strong version of the Bewley model... Are you really in this research area? It sounds like you’re a layman.”

Lu Zhou looked at Wisl’s skeptical eyes and spoke.

“Of course, are you doubting me?”

“No, no.” Wisl waved his hand and said, “Actually, it’s fine if you don’t understand, since this is quite a cutting-edge research field. If you plan on learning about the Lu Bewley model, you should check out lecture hall 1.”

Lu Zhou: “Lecture hall 1?”

“That’s right. Professor Joseph Eugene Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize laureate, is speaking there. Surely you have heard about his Dixit-Stiglitz Model. He’s a

theoretical researcher in symmetric information economics, but he also has profound insights regarding mathematical economics.”

For some reason, there was a hint of envy in Wisl’s voice, as if he wanted to attend the lecture instead of standing at his poster booth.

“Just go if you want to.” Lu Zhou looked around the empty poster booth and said, “There’s no one here anyway.”

“I can’t do that!” Wisl said, “If no one guards the poster booth, someone will take my poster away. That means I’ll be disqualified for the poster creativity award.”

“I’m sorry but... You plan on winning an award with this poster?” Lu Zhou looked at the horribly-drawn poster with his mouth wide open.

This looks more like an abstract art painting.

But for an academic poster...

It would be better if he just took a piece of blank paper and wrote a summary line by line.

However, Wisl wasn’t amused, and he stubbornly spoke, “What if I do win? You never know.”

Lu Zhou shook his head.

“Good luck then... I’m going to lecture hall 1.”

“Go ahead, you might not be able to get a seat... Oh yeah, I didn’t catch your name?” Wisl said to Lu Zhou, who was walking away from the poster booth.

Without looking back, Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“I’m Lu Zhou.”

Wisl: “...???”

942 Not Even One?

When Lu Zhou arrived at lecture hall 1, the report had already begun.

An old man with glasses stood in front of a projector curtain while slowly talking about things Lu Zhou didn't understand.

However, even though he didn't understand what was going on, the other scholars were quietly listening.

This reminded Lu Zhou of his own report. Whenever he did a report, the audience always listened attentively.

Looks like this speaker is an expert.

Lu Zhou didn't stand around for long, he found a seat on the last row and sat down.

Actually, Wisl was sort of exaggerating. Even though there were many people in the lecture hall, he was still able to find a seat.

There were some people sitting on the floor at the front of the lecture hall, and these were often younger people who wore thick glasses. They came to the report with the intent of asking questions.

After Lu Zhou sat down, he looked around and took out his phone. He pulled up the thesis he and Xiao Tong collaborated on and used the rest of his attention listening to Professor Joseph's lecture.

He had mostly forgotten about the theoretical part of the Lu Bewley model. Even though this model seemed to be important in the economics community, it was insignificant to him.

He read the paper again and refreshed his knowledge of the mathematical model he built.

For most people, reading a paper while listening to a lecture was a difficult thing.

However, Lu Zhou was good at multi-tasking and he was used to this.

Back when he was a Princeton professor, he would multi-task and focus on three separate things at once.

Professor Joseph slowly spoke on stage. When he saw a flash of light coming from the back row, he frowned.

The light from Lu Zhou's phone wasn't particularly bright, and it was barely noticeable.

However, everyone else in the lecture hall was looking at Joseph, except one person, who was looking at his phone. Even though Lu Zhou was sitting in the back row, Joseph easily noticed him.

Using one's phone during a report wasn't uncommon, but Joseph had always been against this behavior. He felt like his research result was being disrespected.

However, Joseph only frowned and ignored the disrespectful audience member.

If this were his lecture, he would definitely kick the person out of his lecture hall. However, this was an academic report. He wasn't going to waste the time of other scholars over such a small matter...

Lu Zhou didn't realize a big name economist was annoyed at him.

If only Joseph knew Lu Zhou wasn't playing on his phone, he was reading the thesis!

However, Lu Zhou wouldn't have cared what Joseph thought regardless.

First of all, he wasn't in the economics field; secondly, there were hundreds of people that disliked him, so who cared about one more...

Lu Zhou finished reading the thesis—both the mathematical and the theoretical part.

Lu Zhou put away his phone. He was interested in what evaluation Professor Joseph was going to give his mathematical model. However, the old man's words completely shocked him.

"We all know that a fairly novel mathematical model was recently added to the field of economics. Its creator is the well known Fields Medalist Professor Lu Zhou. His new model improved the Bewley model, reducing the amount of tedious calculations, and making the model calculations more accurate..."

“I’m not denying that this mathematical model is beautiful.”

Professor Joseph looked around the lecture hall and said, “I’m a supporter of the New trade theory, and I often use mathematical tools to help buttress my economics theories. However, I have to mention that mathematics is only a tool for economics. After all, this is a macroeconomics conference, not an accounting and finance conference.”

The audience chuckled.

Most people liked the old man’s joke.

New economists were beginning to rely more and more on computers and mathematical tools. The Nobel Prize in Economics had almost become a mathematics prize.

For some old-fashioned economists, the integration of mathematics was simply stupid.

Professor Joseph paused for a second and spoke.

“Economics is about studying human economic activity, that is, creating, transforming, and trading value. This is not some mathematical game. We’re economists, not accountants.

“Even though this report is based on the Lu Bewley model, I am going to disappoint many people.” Professor Joseph looked at Krugman, who was sitting in the front row. He paused for a few seconds and said, “I will focus the report on the shortcomings of the Lu Bewley model.

“In my opinion, these shortcomings are fatal!”

Suddenly, whispers were heard in the lecture hall.

After hearing Joseph’s speech, Lu Zhou’s expression returned to normal.

He was a mathematician, a complete layman in the field of economics. If there really were fatal flaws, he would just have to accept it.

Not to mention that Professor Joseph was criticizing the economic value of the Lu Bewley model, not the mathematical value.

Therefore, Lu Zhou didn’t really care.

He can say whatever he wants.

Lu Zhou leaned back on his chair and overheard a conversation from two young people, likely PhD students.

“Didn’t Professor Krugman discuss the Lu Bewley model in his latest paper? It seems like he disagrees with Joseph?”

“Of course! Krugman is a supporter of mathematical economics, and he thinks that a beautiful economics model has to have a mathematical foundation... But Krugman doesn’t have good mathematical abilities himself.”

“Looks like this report is going to be interesting then.”

“Yeah, yeah, Professor Krugman is here as well, right?! Joseph is probably doing this report as a response to Krugman’s thesis.”

“Too bad, Professor Krugman isn’t as influential as Professor Joseph!”

Lu Zhou heard the conversation and raised his eyebrows.

Krugman is also in the lecture hall?

Joseph is doing this report for him?

I don’t really know how economics debates work, but I have a feeling this is going to get interesting...

Professor Krugman had a stiff expression on his face.

Professor Joseph’s words undoubtedly embarrassed him.

Xiao Tong couldn’t help but say, “Professor, does the Lu Bewley model... really have fatal flaws?”

“It’s hard to say.” Krugman shook his head and said, “I don’t think there are any flaws... But Joseph is quite the expert in mathematical economics models. Maybe he found problems I haven’t found yet.”

Professor Angus nodded and agreed with his old friend Krugman.

“We should just wait and see what happens. Maybe it’s not that bad.”

Professor Krugman had a solemn expression.

“Yeah, let’s be patient.”

Professor Joseph continued to speak, and he used a marker to write down the important parts on a whiteboard.

“As we all know, the Bewley model overcomes the flaws of the stochastic dynamic general equilibrium framework. It has gradually become the mainstream method of macroeconomic research. The Lu Bewley model has made improvements, such as the use of the ‘endogenous grid method’. This reduces the cumbersome operations...

“However, this also reduced the rigor of the Bewley model.”

$[F(x, y, z) = ag^3_1 + bg^3_2 + cg^3_3 \dots \text{ where } x, y, z \geq 0 \dots]$

[...]

He continued to write down lines of calculations on the whiteboard.

Professor Joseph turned around and faced the lecture hall.

“If the KPR utility function is applied to equation 3, we can see there are obvious problems with the model.

“Just like I said, the Lu Bewley model has a major flaw, so a revision should be made.

“My report is over. If anyone has any questions, feel free to ask away.”

The lecture hall was dead silent.

One could hear a pin drop on the ground.

Professor Joseph glanced at Krugman, who was staring at the whiteboard with a muddled look on his face.

I knew it.

Krugman couldn’t keep up with my explanation at all.

He didn't have anything against Krugman; he was just dissatisfied with the flaws in the Lu Bewley model.

He thought Krugman would at least say something, but Krugman didn't even ask a question.

Joseph looked disappointed.

Not even one person is going to argue with me?!

He was about to walk off stage when he saw someone in the back row raise their hand.

"I have a question."

The voice traveled from the back of the lecture hall...

943 Only Took Me an Hour

Lu Zhou didn't really understand Professor Joseph's explanation.

However, he was vaguely familiar with the equations on the whiteboard.

Even though it only took him an hour to complete this model, that didn't mean the model was worthless.

"... I'm not denying your argument, every discipline should have its own research habits, and mathematics is not the king of research." Lu Zhou coughed and pointed at the whiteboard. He said, "But in regard to the formula on line 3... That's not how you use it."

The venue became more and more lively!

A lot of people looked at the back row, wondering who the arrogant person was.

"Someone is questioning Professor Joseph's mathematics ability?!"

"Even Professor Krugman didn't say anything..."

"Who is this guy, he looks quite young, probably a student?"

“Wait a second, I feel like... This person looks familiar.”

“ ... ”

“Please tell me what the problem is. Otherwise, don’t waste my time,” Professor Joseph said. He realized the person who asked the question was the person playing on his phone just a while ago. He said, “Or do you think you know the Lu Bewley model better than I do?”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Yeah, in terms of the mathematics part.”

The audience was in an uproar.

Professor Joseph frowned and spoke.

“Oh? Enlighten me then, who are you? What university are you from?”

Faced with this irrelevant question, Lu Zhou couldn’t help but frown.

Do you really not recognize me?

This is the second time today someone has asked me this question.

We’re from different races, but my handsomeness is universal, right?

He sighed and spoke.

“Lu Zhou, Jin Ling University.

“Or you can call me Professor Lu.”

The lecture hall suddenly went quiet.

Lu-Lu Zhou?!

Joseph and all of the other scholars in the lecture hall were stunned.

The economists looked at the young scholar standing up.

A lot of people thought they recognized Lu Zhou, but they weren’t sure.

After all, no one would have expected Lu Zhou to appear in a macroeconomics conference.

No one had ever seen Lu Zhou at an economics conference before.

No wonder no one was able to recognize him!

On the other side of the venue, a girl in her twenties had her eyes wide open.

Brother?!

When Xiao Tong heard the familiar voice coming from the back row, her eyes nearly popped out of her socket!

Professor Krugman was sitting next to her, and he was even more excited.

“He came! I knew it!”

He immediately looked at Professor Angus, who was sitting next to him.

Professor Angus coughed and got out of his seat.

“I’m going to the men’s room...”

Professor Krugman smiled.

“That’s fine, but don’t forget about our bet!”

Professor Angus angrily said, “I know, you selfish man... It’s just some gold coins, you’re going to get cavities if you eat too much chocolate.”

“Haha, I’m just honoring the bet... Are you really going to the toilet?”

Professor Krugman looked at the whiteboard and said, “I think... the show is about to begin.”

Professor Angus hesitated for a second and sat back down.

“I guess I can hold it for a while...”

“Let’s see what happens.”

...

Lu Zhou didn’t expect to get himself into this situation.

After he pointed out the calculation problem on the whiteboard, Professor Joseph still didn't give up. Joseph even invited Lu Zhou to walk on stage and point out the problem.

Lu Zhou didn't want to go on stage.

However, as a scholar, when he found out that someone else had used his theory incorrectly, it was his responsibility to point out the error and correct it.

After all, there was no one else in this world that understood the Lu Bewley model better than him.

I want to be humble, but I can't...

Lu Zhou sighed and picked up the marker. He then cleared his throat and spoke.

"I'm only going to write this once, so pay attention."

Professor Joseph was expressionless as he stared at the whiteboard.

However, Lu Zhou didn't feel pressured by his gaze at all.

After thinking for five seconds, the marker in his hand began to dance on the whiteboard. Soon after, lines of calculations appeared on the whiteboard.

As Professor Joseph looked at the calculations on the whiteboard, his pupils contracted and expanded. He was in disbelief.

He wasn't surprised at Lu Zhou's calculations.

Although, the calculations were impressive.

What surprised him was that Lu Zhou didn't pause for a second while writing down the equations! Lu Zhou didn't stop and think at all!

That's right, he didn't stop for even half a second.

It was almost like the entire model was in Lu Zhou's mind, like Lu Zhou had a blueprint of each piece of the puzzle in his head.

A drop of sweat slipped down Joseph's forehead.

Joseph, who was so confident just a second ago, began doubting himself...

When Lu Zhou wrote down the last line of the equation on the whiteboard, the venue was completely silent.

Not only did he conquer Professor Joseph, but he also completely conquered all of the economists sitting here.

Compared to Professor Joseph's writing, every step of Lu Zhou's calculation was written meticulously. Lu Zhou even circled the problems in Professor Joseph's calculations.

Professor Joseph's shoulders trembled as he looked at the whiteboard.

"I can't believe this..."

"These calculations should have taken hours..."

"How did you do it?!"

Lu Zhou smiled and put down the marker.

"Am I correct?"

Even though Joseph didn't want to admit defeat, the result was obvious.

Professor Joseph went silent and reluctantly nodded.

"I admit... I made a mistake in the Lu Bewley model, so you're correct."

There was a commotion in the lecture hall.

Professor Joseph admitted he was wrong?!

Most people couldn't believe what was happening.

After seeing Lu Zhou appear in the lecture hall, most people thought that Professor Joseph might lose. After all, Joseph wasn't nearly as strong as economist Professor Nash. Joseph was a long way from being a Fields Medalist.

However, they didn't expect Joseph to give up without even debating...

“Do you know which part you were wrong?”

“I do...”

Joseph felt a little humiliated.

However, realizing one’s mistake...

There was nothing shameful about that.

Lu Zhou looked at Professor Joseph and nodded.

Not bad, at least he can admit he’s wrong.

He thought that perhaps the old gentleman would try to steer the argument and try to argue from the perspective of an economist.

However, it seemed like Joseph wasn’t that kind of person.

Seeking the truth was a valuable trait.

Especially for a scholar.

“Then I’ll leave it to you to correct the mistakes. I don’t really know much about this stuff.” Lu Zhou turned around and began to walk off stage.

Professor Joseph stepped forward and stopped him.

“Wait a second, you still haven’t told me how you did this in such a short amount of time—”

“Oh... Because this isn’t that difficult at all.”

Lu Zhou turned around and spoke.

“I only spent an hour creating the Lu Bewley model.

“So fixing a mistake shouldn’t take that long.”

944 Might As Well Finish

An hour?!

Professor Joseph's pupils expanded, he looked like he just saw a ghost.

It took him several years of intense research to complete the Dixit-Stiglitz Model with his collaborator, Dixit. He proposed the model in his thesis "Monopolistic Competition and Optimum Product Diversity". This thesis shocked the entire economics community. This indirectly gave birth to the "New trade theory" and won him a Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001!

No one knew about mathematical economics more than him!

Joseph was well aware of how difficult it was to develop a mathematical model that could be used to analyze economic models...

However, Lu Zhou was now telling him that the Lu Bewley model only took him an hour?!

This is ridiculous!

Even if he used the Bewley model as a foundation, it is nearly impossible to improve this sophisticated model in an hour!

In one hour...

It would take most people days just to understand the Bewley Model.

"You have to be kidding..." Professor Joseph said as he stared at the whiteboard.

He was obviously speaking to Lu Zhou.

However, his words didn't reach Lu Zhou's ears.

Because his words were masked by the audience's exclams.

And the man who was writing equations on stage...

He was long gone.

...

Outside of the lecture hall.

Lu Zhou closed the door behind him and heard a commotion behind him.

The commotion was quite loud, and he could hear it through the walls.

“Is it really so surprising?”

I’m not lying, it really only took one hour.

Lu Zhou realized that he didn’t want to stay here for any longer. He tried to walk away from the lecture hall.

However, a young lady with short black hair and who was carrying a notebook in her hand chased after him.

“God Lu! Can you be my mentor?!” the girl excitedly said while using her body to block Lu Zhou’s path.

Lu Zhou looked at the girl and spoke with a headache.

“You’re studying economics, right? I don’t know a lot about economics, you should find someone else—”

The young lady stepped forward and spoke.

“I was deeply moved by your performance on stage! You’ve opened my eyes! I-I want to study mathematics with you!”

Lu Zhou: “...?!”

What is this chick talking about...

Lu Zhou knew that more people were going to chase after him, so this was his chance to escape. He took a deep breath and spoke.

“I’m sorry, you seem like a good person.”

Lady: “???”

Lu Zhou quickly walked past her, toward the direction of the elevator.

He went for an hour run every morning, so he could easily outrun some wannabe economics student.

“Wait a second, God Lu, don’t leave!”

Lu Zhou closed the elevator door and smirked.

“Too slow.”

The elevator door closed.

The elevator began to go up.

The people in the elevator looked at each other.

What is going on?

...

Even though Lu Zhou didn’t check in at the hotel, he could access the hotel elevator using his conference invitation card.

Lu Zhou went to the executive lounge and showed the front desk his invitation card. He took a seat by the window, behind a bookshelf.

“Do you want to drink something?”

“A cup of coffee... and some paper.”

“Is A4 paper fine?”

“Sure.”

“Okay.”

The waitress turned around and walked away.

Lu Zhou took out his phone and looked at the time.

It was two o’clock in the afternoon. It would be a while before the hotel buffet would be ready.

Lu Zhou looked at his phone and muttered to himself, “Should be enough, right?”

The waitress came back with a stack of papers.

“Here’s the A4 paper you wanted, but the coffee will take a while.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “That’s fine, I’m not in a rush.”

He now had some paper and a pen.

Lu Zhou took out his souvenir pen from his pocket. He pondered for a while and began writing.

He actually didn’t understand the report in total just then.

Even though he had never done any research in economics, combining the information provided by Xiao Tong, as well as the content explained by Professor Joseph, he was able to obtain a rough understanding of the economics side of the Lu Bewley model.

After learning about the economics side of the Lu Bewley model, he realized that Professor Joseph wasn’t entirely incorrect.

One could make the case that Joseph was half-correct.

This type of situation was very common in applied mathematics research.

Some things were obvious for Lu Zhou, but for scholars outside of mathematics research, these things were not obvious at all.

“... Professor Krugman’s hypothesis is true, there is room for improvement on the Lu Bewley model, both in the mathematical side and the economics side.”

Lu Zhou recalled the information he heard in the report. He treated this as a mathematical modeling problem and began to write on the paper.

Soon after, a fully written A4 paper was in front of him.

Lu Zhou looked at the paper and gathered his thoughts. He gradually smiled.

“It’s not anything interesting, but since I’m already here, I might as well finish...”

...

When someone entered a state of concentration, time often passed by quickly.

Without Lu Zhou realizing, the sky began to gradually turn dark.

Lu Zhou's phone on the table vibrated.

Xiao Ai: [Master, you have mail (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥) ✧]

Lu Zhou put down his pen and looked at the sky outside the window. "Is it from Professor Krugman?"

Xiao Ai: [Master, you're correct! Good guess! (• ▽ • *)]

Lu Zhou: "What did he say in the email?"

Xiao Ai: [He asked if you have time to get dinner together. ☺▽☺]

Lu Zhou tidied up the dozen or so A4 papers in his hand. He looked at the half-completed page, contemplated for a second, and spoke.

"Write a reply to him.

"Tell him I can do dinner at seven o'clock."

945 More Than an Hour!

[I can do dinner at seven o'clock. ∠ (◡) ∠]

When Krugman read this email, he wasn't sure what the emoticon meant.

"It's five minutes to seven." Professor Angus looked at his watch and said, "Are you sure he meant seven o'clock at night?"

Professor Krugman smiled bitterly and shook his head.

"Honestly speaking, I'm not sure, I'm not even sure if he's talking about today or tomorrow."

"You should clarify with him!"

Professor Angus sighed and spoke.

"I'm going to get a bite... I can't just wait here forever. I suggest you get something to eat as well. The food service is ending in an hour. It's not good to go to bed on an empty stomach."

Professor Angus picked up a dinner plate and was about to grab his food. Suddenly, someone walked through the door.

Professor Krugman's eyes lit up when he saw the familiar face... He stood up and enthusiastically walked over.

"Haha, welcome! Professor Lu, it's nice to meet you!"

Professor Angus put down his plate and walked over as well.

"You're finally here!"

"I'm not late, am I?" Lu Zhou looked at his watch and said, "Close, I'm right on time."

Professor Krugman patted Lu Zhou on the shoulder and said, "It's fine, we're happy to wait for you. Let's eat and talk, I'm starving."

Lu Zhou said, "You haven't eaten yet?"

Professor Angus said, "We were waiting for you."

Lu Zhou awkwardly smiled and spoke.

"... You should've eaten first, I don't really mind."

Professor Angus and Professor Krugman became silent and looked at each other.

So what you're saying is...

F*ck sake!

Why didn't you tell us earlier?!

...

The three men carried their plates full of food and sat by the window.

Professor Krugman looked at the empty seat next to Lu Zhou and remembered something, so he took out his phone from his pocket.

“I have to make a call.”

Lu Zhou nodded. He was starving, so he reached for the knife and began to crack open the lobster on his plate.

After a while, Professor Krugman returned from his phone call.

Lu Zhou’s sister Xiao Tong was walking next to him, the one who flew to Princeton just a few days ago...

“Hi... brother.”

Xiao Tong awkwardly waved and sat next to Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou wasn’t surprised, so he smiled and asked, “How’s it going? Are you settling in well at Princeton?”

“It’s fine...” Xiao Tong scratched her head and said, “Aren’t you surprised I’m in Shanghai?”

Lu Zhou smirked.

“Professor Krugman is here, so I’m guessing he probably brought you as well. Let me guess, when you guys landed, did he ask you to call me and ask me to come?”

Xiao Tong’s eyes were wide open.

“What? How did you know?”

“Wait a second, you didn’t call him?” Krugman looked at Xiao Tong and awkwardly said, “Just to be clear, I didn’t ask her to call you to come. I just asked her to call her family and tell them that she’s safe.”

Lu Zhou: “What’s the difference?”

“Okay then.” Krugman shrugged and said, “I apologize, I was trying to get you to come, but I swear I wasn’t being malicious.”

Professor Angus, who was sitting next to Professor Krugman, said, "Professor Krugman is doing this out of kindness. He wants you to witness the impact your research has made on the economics field... Actually, I'm sure you've seen that the Lu Bewley model is now one of the most popular concepts in economics. I wouldn't be surprised if the Nobel Prize Committee considers you for an economics prize."

"It's too early to talk about that, they still owe me a physics prize for the electrostrong interaction. They should give me that first."

Lu Zhou smiled and turned his face to Xiao Tong, who was looking a little anxious.

"How come you didn't tell me you are in Shanghai?"

Xiao Tong sighed and spoke.

"Okay, I'll be honest... I thought you were going to laugh at me."

Lu Zhou said, "That's not being honest, come on now."

Xiao Tong was shocked. Lu Zhou paused for a second and continued, "Actually, you don't have to worry about causing me trouble."

Xiao Tong blinked and spoke.

"What... are you saying?"

Xiao Tong had a flash of astonishment and consternation in her eyes.

It was as if she was caught in a lie.

Lu Zhou said, "Because isn't that what this is about?"

Lu Zhou smiled and sighed.

"Actually, people always want something from me, and I'm responsible for a lot of things. Things like the ILHCRC ceremony, these are all quite troublesome for me..."

In fact, he knew what Xiao Tong was thinking.

On one hand, she wanted to rely on her brother, but on the other hand, she wanted to be independent. She didn't just want to be Lu Zhou's sister; she wanted to be a strong, mature person...

Lu Zhou totally sympathized with his sister.

After all, Lu Zhou was the same; he never wanted to ask anyone else for favors...

Lu Zhou paused for a second and looked at his sister.

"... You're my sister, I'll do anything for you."

Xiao Tong's eyes began to water.

"... Brother."

Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Tong and rubbed her head.

"Don't hide things from me in the future! Remember what I told you when you were doing your undergrad?"

Xiao Tong sniffed and began to choke up.

"What? It's been so long, how am I supposed to remember..."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "I told you that we're going to win a Nobel Prize in Mathematics."

Professor Angus suddenly said, "There's no mathematics Nobel Prize, only economics!"

"That's right, I agree with Professor Angus," Professor Krugman said as he shook his head. He calmed down and said, "Of course, even though there is no mathematics award, that doesn't mean a mathematician can't win a Nobel Prize... If you continue to do research on the Lu Bewley model, you're going to win a Nobel prize eventually."

Lu Zhou said, "Haha, you're right, there is no mathematics Nobel Prize... I was just kidding."

Lu Zhou looked at Xiao Tong and spoke with a serious look on his face.

“After I left the afternoon report, I thought for a long time.

“My mathematical model was confusing to such a great scholar like Joseph. Even though Joseph was wrong, that must mean there’s something wrong with my model as well.

“Thus, I made some improvements to the Lu Bewley model.”

Lu Zhou took out the stack of folded A4 papers from his pocket and placed it in Xiao Tong’s hands. He said, “These are the draft papers for the improved Lu Bewley model.”

Lu Zhou said to Krugman, “Even though it is not as useful as you described, from a mathematical perspective, it is more rigorous and operable.”

Professor Krugman and Professor Angus were totally confused. Lu Zhou smiled at Xiao Tong, who was holding the stack of A4 papers, and said, “This time, your brother took more than an hour.”

946 Virtue

After handing over the dozen or so pages to Xiao Tong, Lu Zhou left swiftly.

Professor Krugman looked at the stack of A4 papers in Xiao Tong’s hand. He hesitated for a while before speaking, “This is a gift from your brother, how you’re going to use it, that is up to you.

“You can choose to publish it in your name, or you can do something else with it. I don’t want my opinions to influence you, even though I recommend doing the former... After all, your brother doesn’t care about his achievements in economics. He wants to help you... Of course, the decision is yours.”

Although the academic community had severe penalties for fraud and plagiarism, it wouldn’t go as far as to find out who completed the research.

This was similar to unethical supervisors who stole their students’ research results. Most people turned a blind eye to these types of things.

Vice versa, if a generous supervisor was willing to donate their research to a student, the academic community would assume that the supervisor had given up ownership of their research.

After all, there were so many scientific researchers in the world; the community didn't have time to verify the origin of each research result.

Rules with loopholes were better than having no rules.

Therefore, if Xiao Tong wanted to publish this as her own paper, regardless of whether or not she had the ability to write a paper like this, as long as Lu Zhou didn't say anything, the academic community would trust that this was Xiao Tong's own work.

Xiao Tong looked at the paper in her hand for a long time. She sighed and looked determined.

"I made up my mind!

"I didn't go into academia to win some Nobel Prize. This is tempting, but... I want to make my own achievements.

"If I received recognition because of the thesis I collaborated on with my brother, I would be happy... But otherwise, it would feel wrong."

She wasn't against the idea of working on a research project with her brother. However, blatantly receiving all of the credit for something she didn't do, wasn't what she wanted.

She wanted to become a scholar that was worthy of being "Professor Lu's co-author". She didn't want to take other people's research results as her own...

She looked down on people who did that.

She knew that she was still very weak, whereas Lu Zhou was strong enough to the point where even scholars like Professor Krugman were intimidated by him...

But she was still young, and she still had unlimited potential!

Xiao Tong looked at her supervisor Professor Krugman and spoke seriously.

"I want to publish this in my brother's name... Can I do that?"

“Certainly can’t submit it to a journal, but since we’re at an international macroeconomics conference, there are other ways to publish the research, but...” Professor Krugman looked at Xiao Tong with a serious expression and said, “Have you thought about it carefully? This is a result worthy of a Nobel Prize, so I suggest you think this through.”

Xiao Tong nodded without hesitating.

“I’m certain.”

Even though Professor Krugman was a little sympathetic, he had a look of approval in his eyes.

“I’ve seen a lot of young and promising scholars in my lifetime, a lot of successful ones, but scholars who have your morals... It’s one in a million.

“Maybe one day I should visit your parents and ask them how they educated such an excellent kid. I’m sure they are good people.”

“You’ll be disappointed. They’re just normal people.” Xiao Tong smiled brightly and said, “But I love them.”

Professor Krugman smiled and said, “A person’s value isn’t determined by their achievements, but by their heart. You’re still young, you’ll realize this as you grow older. You should go take some rest, Professor Angus and I are going to finish eating. You don’t have to sit here with us old men.”

Xiao Tong nodded and left.

Only two people were left.

Professor Angus looked at Professor Krugman. He then poked Krugman’s elbow and comforted him.

“That’s a good student you have there.”

“Yeah...” Professor Krugman nodded and sighed. He said, “Not tempted by a Nobel Prize level research... If I didn’t have a Nobel Prize myself, I’m afraid I would have given in to the temptation.

“But this really would have helped her career.”

Angus raised his eyebrows. “I’m surprised.”

Krugman: "Surprised?"

"Yeah, I can't believe you actually think about things from the perspective of your students. I've heard a lot of rumors about you, the bad kind."

"What kind of rumors?" Krugman said, "Don't think that everyone in my office is my student. It's easy to become my students."

He only accepted some of the "students" in his office to fulfill teaching quotas.

Rumors?

They can say whatever they want.

Who cares?

...

On the way back, Lu Zhou realized that his approach might have been a little inappropriate.

However, he realized that Xiao Tong and him were the same type of people, so he had nothing to worry about.

Improving the Lu Bewley model was his responsibility as a scholar. He gave it to Xiao Tong in hopes of her completing the thesis, but it was also because Xiao Tong was his sister...

Of course, he knew that he was spoiling his sister.

This was a Nobel Prize level research in a field that he didn't care about. Even though he was always a rule-following scholar, there was a part of him that wished Xiao Tong could publish this as her own research...

Lu Zhou returned to his hotel and threw the invitation letter on the desk. He was about to sit at his desk and get some work done, but his stomach began to grumble.

Lu Zhou realized that he didn't eat a lot at the buffet at all...

"Sigh, I was too busy humble bragging, I didn't even finish eating... What a shame."

Lu Zhou looked at the clock on the wall.

It was already half-past nine.

If he went to bed immediately, he wouldn't have to eat. However, it was too early to sleep.

Whatever, f*ck it.

I never gain weight anyway.

Lu Zhou was about to call for room service when his phone suddenly began to rang.

He took out his phone from his pocket and saw it was Chen Yushan calling.

Lu Zhou picked up the phone and spoke.

"Hello?"

Chen Yushan cautiously asked, "Hey, are you free tomorrow?"

Lu Zhou thought about it and said, "I think so, why?"

"Wait at the hotel tomorrow morning! I'll pick you up, you said you would come!"

Before Lu Zhou could reply, Chen Yushan immediately hung up the phone.

When Lu Zhou heard the beeping sound from the phone, he was muddled.

"...?"

Why did she hang up?

So I wouldn't have a chance to refuse?

I wasn't going to refuse regardless!

Lu Zhou was perplexed.

I always keep my word!

But then again, thank god she called me.

I totally forgot about the summit...

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 947 - The Most Exciting Event of the Year -

947 The Most Exciting Event of the Year

The next day, lecture hall 1.

Professor Krugman walked on stage in a suit. He was holding a stack of papers in his hand.

This seminar was supposed to be done by Xiao Tong, but because she had no experience talking at large conferences, she wouldn't have been able to convey her brother's research results correctly to the economics community.

Actually, it didn't matter who did the report.

Because she had already made up her mind.

Professor Krugman looked at the quiet audience. He then cleared his throat and spoke.

"I'm sure many of you here today had the chance to witness the report yesterday.

"Professor Joseph made a comprehensive analysis of the Lu Bewley model, and even though there were some misunderstandings, those misunderstandings were corrected.

"I have nothing to add in regard to the Lu Bewley model. In fact, I shouldn't be the one standing here; instead, it should've been Professor Lu."

There was a commotion in the crowd.

"What is Professor Krugman talking about?"

"Did Professor Lu do something again?"

“If I recall correctly, this report should be about the application of the Lu Bewley model in macroeconomics.”

“Looks like Professor Krugman made a last-minute change and gave up on the paper he was originally planning to publish... Is he planning on presenting Professor Lu’s new research?”

Professor Krugman looked at the noisy crowd and cleared his throat, signaling the audience to stop talking.

When the lecture hall became quiet again, he spoke in a clear voice.

“Yesterday afternoon, Professor Lu made some adjustments to his research, and he left us with an improved version of the Lu Bewley model.

“Some people might be doubtful of what he was able to achieve in just one short afternoon. In fact, I was also suspicious...

“Until I read his paper.”

A lot of people in the lecture hall looked shocked.

Except for those who were in the lecture hall yesterday, because they knew that Lu Zhou was able to create the Lu Bewley model in just one hour.

Professor Krugman paused for a second and looked at Professor Joseph, who was sitting in the front row. He then looked at the audience and spoke.

“I am about to show you the improved version of the Lu Bewley model.

“Please listen carefully.”

...

With his back turned toward the audience, Professor Krugman wrote on the whiteboard with a marker in his hand. He wrote down a detailed summary of the Lu Bewley model to the best of his abilities.

Even though the formulas on the whiteboard were only the tip of the iceberg, many mathematically inclined scholars sitting here could clearly see the improvements Lu Zhou made to the Lu Bewley model.

This was a kind of academic intuition.

It was something accumulated from years of researching macroeconomics.

Professor Joseph was one of them.

He was listening and watching carefully, and he was both surprised and relieved.

He finally believed that Lu Zhou wasn't kidding.

The fact that Lu Zhou was able to do this all in one afternoon proved that his mathematical abilities were far beyond anyone else...

And it wasn't just his mathematics ability.

His ability to apply mathematics to other fields was also unparalleled!

I'm afraid that even John Nash wouldn't have been able to do something like this...

"Mathematics is changing science..." Professor Joseph said as he stared at the formulas on the whiteboard. He smiled and said, "He's the apex predator of scholars..."

"He's actually quite humble for how strong he is."

He's not just changing science.

He's redefining science!

He's redefining everyone's understanding of mathematical economics...

Professor Krugman, who was standing on stage, stopped writing.

He looked at the paper in his hand and compared it with the content on the whiteboard. After making sure there were no mistakes, he turned around and faced the audience.

"Does anyone have any questions?"

The audience was dead silent, and no one raised their hand.

Professor Krugman looked at the silent audience and was convinced he made himself very clear.

“Okay then...”

He was about to put down the marker, but someone suddenly raised their hand.

“Wait a second.”

Everyone turned their attention toward the young scholar, who blushed with embarrassment as he spoke.

“I don’t have a question, but regarding this model... What is its name? It should be different from the original Lu Bewley model, right?”

This was quite a crucial question.

There was a lot of discussion going on in the lecture hall.

Professor Krugman paused for a second.

Lu Zhou didn’t give this model a name...

Just like how the original Lu Bewley model was named by other scholars, not Lu Zhou himself.

It seems like Professor Lu isn’t enthusiastic about naming economics research results after himself.

Professor Krugman smiled and thought carefully for a while. He cleared his throat and spoke.

“Should we add Joseph to it? After all, Professor Lu himself admitted that he was inspired by Professor Joseph’s report—”

Halfway through his sentence, he was interrupted.

“I don’t deserve it.”

Professor Joseph, who was sitting in the front row of the lecture hall, suddenly stood up and said, “Also, I don’t want to be cited as a counterexample of being wrong, I don’t deserve to receive credit for this model.”

“Oh, that’s not what I meant.” Professor Krugman hastily said, “This is just to differentiate between the two models.”

The old man stared at the whiteboard for a while.

Finally, he spoke.

“I think we can all see that the improved Lu Bewley model has deviated from the framework of the Bewley model.

“This new model is a more flexible, operable economics model.

“Therefore, I propose for it to have a completely new name... The L-Z model.”

There was a commotion in the crowd.

The scholars sitting in the lecture hall nodded their heads in agreement.

Some scholars weren't sure of this name, so they began to think about something.

Professor Angus nodded with approval.

Angus said, “It seems like yesterday's event made a huge impact on Joseph... I'm not in the position to make a judgment, but I think Joseph deserves to be commemorated.”

Wisl, who was sitting next to Professor Angus, was totally confused.

He couldn't help but ask out of curiosity, “Professor Angus... What happened yesterday?”

“You weren't here?” Professor Angus said, “Oh yeah, you weren't able to come.”

Wisl gulped and said, “What happened?”

“Nothing, it's just unfortunate that you missed out on an exciting macroeconomics seminar.”

Professor Angus looked at the regretful PhD student as he smiled and said, “It was probably the most exciting seminar of the year.”

948 Shocking the Economics World!

The macroeconomics conference wasn't over yet, neither was Professor Krugman's report. However, Lu Zhou's paper already caused a sensation in the economics world!

Phd students had begun discussing this on Facebook and other economics forums.

[Who is at the Shanghai conference?! Please live stream Professor Krugman's report!]

[L-Z model? F*ck sake! It took me two months to learn the Lu Bewley model, now you're telling me the Lu Bewley model is outdated?!]

[I'm at the report right now, everyone in the lecture hall has gone crazy! Not only will the L-Z model become the most popular research field in macroeconomics, but apparently, the Chinese guy Lu Zhou created the model in one afternoon...]

[Jesus! Some people could achieve more in an afternoon than others could achieve in a week... This world is too cruel.]

One impressive research result wasn't anything special, plenty of great economics research were being done every day. However, being able to create such an impressive research result in one afternoon was a bit scary...

Everyone that heard the news was in disbelief.

One afternoon...

Is he even human?

Of course, other people began discussing this model from a macroeconomics perspective.

The more they dove into the model, the more they began to doubt themselves.

Just like Professor Joseph said at the conference, even though the Lu Bewley model was built on the basis of the Bewley model, it was completely different from the Bewley model.

Not just that, but the L-Z model was more applicable in many cases compared to the Lu Bewley model. From the income savings model to fixed assets and social welfare, the L-Z model was applicable to a range of macroeconomics topics.

In theory, it was applicable!

These applications would have never been done with the Bewley model.

Of course, there were also shortcomings of the L-Z model. Because the flexibility of the model had increased, its difficulty also increased. Anyone that wanted to master this model would have to have a deep understanding of functional analysis and partial differential equations, as well as an economics background.

However, its shortcomings were well worth its functionality.

A famous economics professor at Stanford published a tweet after reading the paper.

[If the Nobel Prize committee considers this for a Nobel Prize, I wouldn't be surprised at all. It is obvious which area of macroeconomics will become popular over the next decade. I am certain that the greatest achievements in macroeconomics over the next decade will be tied to the L-Z model.]

After he published the tweet, he received a ton of likes and retweets from his peers in his field.

Within a day, the L-Z model had shocked the entire economics field.

Right after Professor Krugman's report, a video of his report was uploaded to YouTube.

The video spread like a virus, and its link was being shared on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms.

Lu Zhou had no idea what kind of impact his thesis was making. He didn't even know that the Lu Bewley model was renamed to the L-Z model.

He definitely wouldn't have agreed to this name.

The reason was simple; it was because the L-Z name was already used in other fields!

How are these guys so lazy?

Can't they come up with a more creative name?

Lu Zhou would have preferred a cooler sounding name. Of course, he wasn't arrogant enough to name the model himself, but he would have gladly let others name it for him.

A Maybach parked at the Sheraton hotel entrance.

Lu Zhou yawned as he walked out of the hotel.

Because of the formal occasion, the clothes he wore were much more formal than yesterday. He put on the most expensive suit he packed for the trip.

An expensive car, a beautiful girl... and a handsome guy. Lu Zhou was bound to receive attention.

Lu Zhou, who was still feeling a little sleepy, was surrounded by envious eyes of tourists walking into the hotel. He couldn't help but smirk.

A soft pale hand pushed open the front passenger door of the Maybach as the driver said, "Come on, hurry up."

"What's the hurry..." Lu Zhou walked next to the car and asked, "Where's Mrs. Yang?"

"Oh, my auntie? She's already there. She doesn't want to hang with us young folks." Chen Yushan raised her eyebrows and said, "Hurry up, I'll drive you there."

Lu Zhou was about to get in the car, but he realized a serious problem.

"Wait a second, are you sure about driving? Should I ask my driver..."

Chen Yushan suddenly furrowed her eyebrows.

"Are you doubting my driving skills?"

“No...”

Lu Zhou sweated and looked at Wang Peng as a cry for help.

Wang Peng paused for a second and made eye contact with Lu Zhou.

“Ms. Chen can drive. You’ll have more space... I’ll follow you guys from behind.”

Lu Zhou: “???”

It’s a four-seater Maybach, there’s plenty of space.

There’s only three of us...

Lu Zhou reluctantly sat in the passenger seat.

As Chen Yushan smiled proudly, Lu Zhou coughed and warned her for the sake of his safety.

“I believe in your driving skills, but... Just drive slow.”

“Shut up, just put on your seatbelt!” Chen Yushan turned on the engine and stepped on the gas pedal. “Sit tight!”

949 High-tech Innovation and Investment Summi

Actually, Lu Zhou didn’t have to worry at all.

It was impossible to drive fast in a big, traffic-ridden city like Shanghai.

Chen Yushan was feeling a little down because of the traffic, Lu Zhou comforted her and secretly felt relieved.

What surprised him was that he always had the impression that Chen Yushan was a reserved and smart girl. He had never seen the masculine side of her before.

Lu Zhou: “You like cars?”

Chen Yushan contemplated for a bit and answered, "Kind of, but I'm not that into it. Thanks to Star Sky Technology and you, I'm earning more money than I can spend. Forget about buying cars, I can retire if I want to."

She was obviously kidding.

Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

"You're not projecting, are you? Are you planning on retiring?"

"Of course not." Chen Yushan smiled and said, "I don't work to earn money. Do you do research for academic prizes? Are you going to retire if you win another Nobel Prize?"

Lu Zhou said, "For me, the Nobel Prize is just the beginning, it's not the end-goal."

Chen Yushan: "What happens after the ILHC is built?"

Lu Zhou felt like Chen Yushan was serious, maybe she expected some kind of answer.

However, Lu Zhou had no idea what would happen in the future.

He pondered for a while before answering, "Maybe I'll use the collider to discover something new, I don't know what, but my intuition is always accurate."

"Oh, really?" Chen Yushan smirked and said, "People always want more... We're here."

A uniquely-shaped building caught their attention.

Nearby was the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, which was across from the Bund International Architecture Exhibition. Two huge glass spheres, one big and one small, were sitting on top of a milky white building.

As Lu Zhou looked at the fleet of luxury cars parked in front of the Shanghai International Convention Center, he couldn't help but speak.

"Quite the venue."

This was much more impressive than the ILHCRC unveiling ceremony.

Chen Yushan: “Of course, giant companies and investment banks from all over the world are coming here. If you want people to work with you, you have to show them strength. Not to mention that this conference is backed by the AIIB and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.”

“AIIB and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation?”

“Correct! Apparently, the higher-ups plan on building a new economic region along the transregional power grid in Southeast Asia, thus expanding the market share of Chinese companies.”

“So kind of like Silk Road?”

He didn’t know a lot about politics.

“Sort of, but there are small differences. Even though we’re dominating in the field of controllable fusion and aerospace, we still have to catch up in other areas... Give me a second, let me park the car.”

Chen Yushan successfully parked the car in an empty parking space. She couldn’t help but flauntingly smirk at Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou looked at her and didn’t know what to say.

There are no cars on either side of the parking space, even I could’ve parked it...

However, Lu Zhou didn’t want to piss her off. He followed her and began walking into the conference center...

...

It was obvious that this summit was sponsored by AIIB and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

This summit was unlike any other summit.

Hundreds of people were walking into the conference center, and this was quite an eye-opening experience for Lu Zhou.

The huge convention center made it easy to accommodate all of the participants. Various sample pieces were scattered across the building, including small collider models sent from the Institute of Physics of the

Chinese Academy of Sciences. It was like a miniaturized version of the World's Fair.

Contracts on the magnitude of tens of billions of yuan were being negotiated here. These decisions were going to impact the future of the world.

The macroeconomics conference he participated in paled in comparison to this summit.

Lu Zhou and Chen Yushan went their separate ways and planned on meeting up later. An old man in a suit with neatly combed hair walked up to him.

"You're Academician Lu, right? Nice to meet you."

"I am..." Lu Zhou shook hands with the old man and said, "Who are you?"

"AIIB president, Gong Weiqi." The old man handed him a card and said, "This is my business card, just call me Mr. Gong."

President of AIIB!

Lu Zhou took the business card and looked surprised.

He was surprised that Mr. Gong was able to recognize him since he didn't expect the summit organizer to greet him personally.

Lu Zhou composed himself and put away the business card. He smiled at the old man and spoke.

"Unfortunately, I don't have a business card."

The old man smiled and said, "That's fine, Academician Lu, you're a scholar, not a businessman. You don't need a business card for others to remember you. You're the representative of the Chinese academic community. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to attend this summit! Apologies for not sending you an invitation letter in advance, hope you can forgive us."

"No, it's fine, I just came here to look around."

Lu Zhou was a little embarrassed by the old man's enthusiasm.

He's too polite.

Lu Zhou felt like most of the executives that worked at banks were good at talking with people.

Lu Zhou wondered how Mr. Gong would react if he spoke his mind.

Of course, Lu Zhou would never say that kind of stuff.

After some small talk, President Gong offered to give Lu Zhou a tour of the conference.

Lu Zhou obviously wasn't going to refuse a free tour guide.

Lu Zhou politely accepted President Gong's offer.

The two walked while Lu Zhou asked some questions about the summit as well as the conference center. President Gong answered his questions one by one.

Lu Zhou suddenly noticed an Oriental Pearl TV Tower model standing there.

The tower was about 5 meters tall, made fully from metal.

A few excited Europeans were standing in front of the tower. They fiddled with some kind of measurement instrument and took photos.

"That's the... Oriental Pearl TV Tower?"

Lu Zhou looked at the sign next to the model, then glanced at the staff member standing next to the tower.

Shenyang Machine Tool?

What does the Shenyang Machine Tool have to do with the Oriental Pearl TV Tower?

President Gong knew what Lu Zhou was thinking, so he smiled and spoke.

"Correct, but this isn't just a normal model of the Oriental Pearl TV Tower. It was built precisely to scale, using the latest high-precision five-axis machine tool from Shenyang Machine Tool. Apparently, the processing accuracy is within $0.01\mu\text{m}$. I don't know if that is true, but they're the top of the industry!"

Lu Zhou: "And those people are?"

President Gong: "Siemens engineers. A lot of European and North American companies are attending this conference. These internationally renowned industry giants have sent their representatives all the way here."

Lu Zhou: "..."

When Lu Zhou heard the words Siemens, he had an awkward look on his face.

He still remembered that in order to build the space shuttle, Xiao Ai secretly bought two Siemens high-precision five-axis machine tools from Europe...

When the machine tools arrived at the port of Haizhou, the customs staff were horrified, and they immediately reported it to their superiors. After that, somehow Chief Engineer Yang from Shenyang Machine Tool heard about the news and was able to snatch a machine tool for himself.

It seemed like the machine tool was being put to good use.

Shenyang Machine Tool probably reverse-engineered Siemens' high-precision five-axis machine tool and even presented the finished product at the conference center, shocking the Siemens engineers.

The surface finish of the non-ferrous metals on the tower reached a precision rating of Ra0.005 μ m. Even Mikrotorn's top machine tools could barely reach this accuracy.

When did the Chinese machine tools become this nutty?!

This is insane!

The Siemens engineers looked shocked, and Lu Zhou suddenly felt quite bad for them.

They probably didn't realize this tower was created using their own machine tool.

The only thing that Shenyang Machine Tool changed was the control system, which was created by Star Sky Technology to maximize the performance of the machine tool...

Lu Zhou sighed and looked away.

“I guess the student is surpassing the master.”

Who cares!

I’m not the one who did the reverse engineering, so it’s not my fault.

If Yang Zhongquan isn’t embarrassed, why would I be?

President Gong nodded and spoke.

“Yeah, Academician Lu, you’re right, our industry is—”

“Let’s go somewhere else.”

President Gong nodded and spoke.

“Oh, okay...”

950 You’re a Respectable Opponen

A silver-white egg-shaped capsule was sitting at a booth in the exhibition hall.

This was the X-2 life support system from Space-X, built and improved on the foundation of the original life support system.

After the failure of the Ares program, the cooperation between Space-X and Blue Origin ended. After Amazon threw a bunch of resources into Blue Origin, Musk found a Japanese aerospace technology company based in Tanegashima as a new partner. Thus, the X-2 machine designed for lunar missions was born.

There was no doubt that this was a wise decision.

Because of the failure of the Ares program, it was impossible to initiate a new colonizing mission on Mars in the near future.

Even if the United States Congress agreed, the “New Virginia” incident investigation committee members would protest and cause them trouble.

Therefore, China was the only customer that would pay for technology from Space-X, because China was the only country that wanted to send people to the Moon.

The High-tech Innovation and Investment Summit did not exclude American companies. After receiving an exhibition permit, Musk told his people from Space-X to bring this silver “egg” over, and he even gave it a cute name—Rice Ball—in hopes of winning over the Chinese.

The demonstration unit of the X-2 life support system had limited functionality and was 50% smaller than its true size. However, it was more than enough to use as a display item. People could even open the hatch and climb in to experience what it would be like to sleep on an astronaut’s bed.

Unfortunately, this silver egg didn’t attract a lot of attention. No one seemed to be interested, no one was climbing inside the egg.

After all, the failure of the Ares program only occurred last year, in which the Chinese had to rescue the colonists and the world even faced a possible bacteria pandemic. Space-X undoubtedly had advanced technology...

But people felt like it was lacking in safety.

That was people’s impression of Space-X.

People subconsciously looked down on companies that had past failures.

Elon stood next to his booth, casually talking to some reporters that were interviewing him. Elon looked at the unamused investors walking past his booth. He then casually spoke to the white guy standing next to him.

“You know what? Bobby, my biggest regret in life is not trying harder to convince Professor Lu to stay in Los Angeles when he was at the Los Angeles materials science conference a few years ago...”

Bobby was one of the senior executives at Tesla.

Even though he had nothing to do with Space-X, Musk appointed him as the General Manager of the China region. He was responsible for the Tesla factory in Shanghai, as well as any other Chinese related Space-X projects.

Bobby listened to his boss and glanced at him.

“Was Professor Lu already... researching aerospace back then?”

Elon shook his head and said, “Not yet, he was researching lithium positive electrode materials made of nanospheres. Which was exactly what Tesla needed... or what the entire world needed. That’s why I approached him and gave him an offer.”

Bobby said, “What was the offered salary?”

Elon smiled and shook his head. “His value can’t be measured by salary alone. I could tell something was special about him. I invited him to be my partner, to conquer the automotive industry together... Unfortunately, he rejected my offer.”

Bobby knew what Elon meant.

After all, Professor Lu had become the poster child of the electric vehicle industry. Professor Lu obviously didn’t want to give up his control and have to work with a partner...

After all, Professor Lu had all of the patents.

Bobby looked at his boss and said, “There’s not much we can do. He knows his worth; he’s not like those geeky nerds.”

“But I think anything is possible.” Elon shrugged and said, “Back then, he was just a Princeton professor, maybe he knew the value of his patents, but I don’t think he had that kind of insight. If only I offered more Tesla or Space-X shares to him... We could’ve been the ones having companies begging to work with us.”

“I don’t like the word beg, we’re not begging here... We’re just doing normal business operations,” Bobby said. “Working with China is beneficial for both sides.”

Musk said, “I know, but sometimes, I think what if I could travel back to ten years ago—”

Before he could finish, a familiar voice interrupted him.

“Interesting idea, but you should step out of fantasy land. Even if you give me all of the Space-X shares, I would still refuse.”

Elon turned around and squinted his eyes.

“Lu Zhou?”

The person standing next to Lu Zhou was President Gong, which Elon also recognized.

“Hi, Mr. Musk, we meet again...” Lu Zhou smiled and reached out his right hand.

Elon smiled and shook Lu Zhou’s hand.

“Yeah, it’s been a while. I’ve always wanted to visit you and tell you that you’re a respectable opponent.”

“Same here.” Lu Zhou looked at the white egg behind Elon and said, “To be honest, your impulsive plans to colonize Mars was quite shocking. We never would have anticipated having to send our astronauts millions of kilometers away on a rescue mission.”

Elon had an awkward expression on his face.

“Did you come here just to say that?”

Lu Zhou: “No, I was just passing by.”

Elon: “...”

Lu Zhou didn’t look like he was joking.

Like he said, he was just passing by.

Being disrespected like this annoyed Elon.

Did he really come all the way here...

Just to insult me?

What a weird kid.

951 Elon's Plans

Lu Zhou just planned on walking around the exhibition hall, he didn't expect to bump into his old opponent.

After leaving Elon's booth, Lu Zhou looked at President Gong.

"So Space-X is also at the Summit?"

President Gong smiled and said, "Of course, the Asian market is open to the entire world, we do not discriminate. This is why we are working with more than 90 companies from all over the world."

He suddenly remembered something and spoke.

"I heard that Elon has been doing a lot in Shanghai recently."

Even though Lu Zhou wasn't interested in business matters, he was curious about what the so-called real-life Iron Man was doing.

"Like what?"

President Gong: "They acquired a North American electric vehicle charging station company named EVgo. After the restructuring of EVgo, they moved the headquarters and factory from North America to Shanghai. They plan on rolling out their own electric charging stations in Shanghai. Apparently, the Shanghai authorities are quite happy that the EVgo headquarters and factory are in Shanghai, thus they are receiving support from relevant state departments."

Even though China held a battery standardization conference a few years ago, that didn't mean there was no market share available for charging station companies to take.

After all, the cost of directly replacing a battery was more expensive than charging the battery. And only some gas stations were doing battery replacements. Although battery replacement services were more convenient on long road trips, its functionality in the city was quite limited.

Due to the improvement of charging technology and expanding coverage of charging stations, users could charge at various parking lots that covered residential and commercial areas. This was even more convenient than swapping out a battery!

Elon's plans were apparent.

Lu Zhou gradually realized something.

"... He plans on putting Tesla chargers across Shanghai?"

"Correct." President Gong nodded and said, "More precisely, he plans on building Tesla and another alternative energy vehicle compatible charging stations and selling the electricity produced by our nuclear power plant back to us."

Jesus f*ck, what a creative business idea!

Lu Zhou said, "Would the state agree?"

President Gong smiled and said, "There's nothing illegal about this. Of course, we can break the rules of the game and think outside the box as well, but that might not be a good thing for us."

Lu Zhou contemplated for a while and shook his head.

"Thinking about this hurts my brain..."

I guess academia is more suitable for me!

Even though academia wasn't perfect, the problems were more black and white. All Lu Zhou had to do was focus on academic problems and let other people handle the business side.

But now, he felt like he had almost reached the ceiling of academia.

From the Lunar Orbit Committee to the ILHCRC, it felt like it was becoming more and more difficult to avoid the business side of things.

If he left the business side and only focused on the academic side, a lot of projects wouldn't have been possible.

“Haha, it is quite troublesome, but normal people like me still need something to do. After all, we can’t all study nuclear fusion and mathematical conjectures!”

President Gong smiled and changed the topic of conversation.

“Forget about this, Academician Lu, if you’re interested, you should go to the High-tech Industry Development Conference later. The state plans on investing 50 billion yuan to support the development of high tech industries. We could use some suggestions from academicians like you.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and spoke.

“I’ve been to enough conferences over the past few days, so no, thanks.”

Honestly, he only came here for Chen Yushan.

He was so sick of dealing with the business side of things.

President Gong smiled and said, “Okay then, if you just want to walk around, there are some entrepreneurs who are giving pitches to investors, which you might be interested in.”

Lu Zhou: “I’ll check it out then.”

President Gong smiled and said, “It’s getting late, I still have to prepare for a meeting, see you later then.”

...

Near the Space-X booth, Bobby curiously Elon asked, “What were you going to say, about going back ten years ago?”

He was curious about what his boss had to say.

Elon looked at Lu Zhou walking away and said, “I would try my best to convince him to work for me, or lobby Congress and let those idiots realize that this person is in control of the future of the United States... Or I’ll find a way to get my hands on the fusion and lithium-sulfur battery technology.”

Bobby replied, “And go to prison for corporate espionage?”

Elon shrugged and said, “It’s just a fantasy.”

Bobby sighed and spoke.

“... Okay then.”

Space-X was Elon's baby.

Even if Space-X didn't make any money, it was still Elon's most treasured company.

However, despite his efforts into building this company, Space-X was still being defeated by China's aerospace industry.

This kind of defeat would demoralize anyone.

Elon watched Lu Zhou disappear in the crowd. He then turned toward Bobby and whispered in his ear.

Elon looked around and quietly spoke.

“Listen, I don't care what the White House thinks, but we're a business, and making money from other countries is the best thing we can do to help America.

“After the Pangu reactor was built, it is clear that China plans on accelerating the urbanization process. I've discussed this with some of my Chinese politician friends, and there are signs that Beijing wants to build a giant urban city that covers the whole area of Shanghai, Jiangsu Province, Zhejiang Province, and Anhui Province. It will be called the Yangtze River Delta City Group.

“If they succeed, it will become one of mankind's greatest achievements.”

Bobby held his breath and spoke.

“That... is scary...”

“This is an opportunity for us, and as long as we provide a service for alternative energy, we'll be able to benefit from this.” Elon patted Bobby's shoulder and said, “You got this, I need you to represent Tesla and overtake all of Shanghai's electric charging stations...”

“We need a market share of over 80%.”

952 Company Pitch

Lu Zhou walked through the entire exhibition hall.

There was still some time before he had to meet up with Chen Yushan. He remembered the startup pitches President Gong mentioned, so he began walking to the conference room.

The presentations were held in a moderately sized lecture hall on the side of the conference center. Compared to the lively exhibition hall, the lecture hall was more professional and had a serious atmosphere.

When Lu Zhou walked into the conference room, he saw that 80% of the seats were taken. Most of the seats had a sign placed on a table in front of them, stating the name and company of the participant.

Lu Zhou looked around and saw that most of the people sitting here were large investment banks and venture capital executives, and there were also some angel investors.

Not everyone was allowed to pitch their project here.

The projects being presented here were much more sophisticated than the projects pitched to random investors in small meeting rooms.

All of the presenters here were from famous universities; an achievement such as winning a gold medal from the national mathematical modeling competition was nothing out of the ordinary.

Basically, all of the projects had the brains and talent, they just needed money!

Of course, even though these projects were the cherry-picked ones, that didn't mean they were all going to be successful. Even if they received fundings from large international banks such as Softbank, not everyone's company could become Uber.

Lu Zhou didn't care about watching the next unicorn being funded, he was just here for the fun.

He sat down in the venue and took in the ambiance. He suddenly realized that this was similar to the academic conferences he had participated in. One person would present their PowerPoint, the audience would critique it, then the next person would walk onto the stage. However, there was something that felt different.

Lu Zhou felt like he was out of place.

While he was wondering why he felt out of place, a man in a suit sitting next to him was staring at him.

There was nothing weird about this. The man just felt that Lu Zhou looked familiar.

Lu Zhou noticed him and smiled.

“Can I help you?”

The man smiled and reached out his hand.

“Xiang Hongchuan, partner at Zhujiang Venture Capital, you are?”

Lu Zhou shook his hand.

“Just a university professor.”

This was an effective tactic.

Lu Zhou could clearly notice that after telling the man he was just a university professor, the man’s smile disappeared. The man made some small talk and ended the conversation.

From the man’s perspective, Lu Zhou was just a professor coming here to support their student’s pitch.

Lu Zhou was glad this guy didn’t disturb him any longer. He started to watch the performance on stage.

Correct, this was just entertainment for Lu Zhou.

These students were quite impressive, like President Gong said, the pitches were quite interesting.

Some guy took a drone on stage, and he was very straightforward as he talked about the future market prospects of civilian drones, and how his biggest competitor was DJI.

It was rare for a startup to have a real demonstrable product. Unfortunately, he didn't clearly explain how he planned on taking the market share from DJI, nor did he make a good impression on the venture capital executives.

After the five-minute presentation, the venture capital investors asked some questions, which the presenter wasn't able to answer clearly.

Lu Zhou looked at the depressed young man and couldn't help but think of the Campus Assistant startup he made when he was in university.

Even to this day, plenty of Jin Ling University students were using the timetable software he made.

Should I support this young entrepreneur's dream?

However, the university student on stage didn't give Lu Zhou a chance. He couldn't stand being embarrassed on stage, so he quickly walked away.

...

Twenty minutes went by.

This was Lu Zhou's fifth PowerPoint.

He watched a young guy in his twenties walk on stage with his PowerPoint projected on the curtain behind him.

"Allow me to introduce myself, I am Li Tinghui. I graduated with an electrical engineering degree from Aurora University. I did my master's in electric vehicle charging station design. The idea is to design a convenient and fast charging station. Then I was inspired when I was doing my internship at..."

He only had five minutes of allocated presentation time, yet he spent a minute talking about himself. The investors began to feel impatient.

The guy on stage finally began to talk about his idea, which was a "wireless charging station".

Unfortunately, he missed his chance.

When it came to the venture capital world, they didn't care about the origin story of the entrepreneur. They only cared about the market prospects and potential competitors of the product... More importantly, profitability.

The guy spent a minute talking about nonsense, so his project was doomed from the beginning.

It was obvious that Li Tinghui was a novice in the entrepreneurial field.

As expected, because he used too much time introducing himself, he didn't have time to explain his project in detail at all. He skimmed through most of his 40-page PowerPoint.

But then again, it was his fault for making such a long PowerPoint for a 5-minute presentation.

It wasn't like the investors cared about the charging station design drawings anyway. Not to mention that this guy was only a master's student, once he received funding, they would hire a professional engineering team to design the product.

Was it possible for an entrepreneur to receive funding, purely due to their technology, not their business plan?

It was!

But one would at least have to be in the Changjiang Scholars Program or a professor at a famous university.

Moreover, they would also have to have the relevant technology patents and special support policies from the state.

The partner from Zhujiang Venture Capital, who was sitting next to Lu Zhou, shook his head and whispered to his colleague.

Lu Zhou was the only person who was interested in the PowerPoint, and he even paid attention to the design blueprints on the PowerPoint.

Being able to design a product like this as a master's student was quite impressive. However, Lu Zhou could see some mistakes in the blueprints.

It was true that wireless charging would be a convenient technology.

After all, people would be interested in not having to plug and unplug the charging cable. If they could integrate this technology into parking spaces, it would be perfect.

However...

How does he plan on convincing other electric vehicle companies to implement a wireless charging compatible battery?

Is he going to make a battery himself?

That is ridiculous...

Wait a minute...

Lu Zhou's eyebrows furrowed when he suddenly realized that Zhongshan New Materials, which was owned by Star Sky Technology, had begun producing lithium-sulfur batteries themselves.

He remembered Liu Wanshan from Zhongshan New Materials telling him this when they went hiking.

The staff member standing next to the podium notified Li Tinghui that his time was up.

Li Tinghui ended his speech with, "Our company will use the funding to purchase experimental equipment, and we're looking at 5 million yuan from the first round of investment."

Actually, his original financing goal was 10 million.

However, he knew in his mind that 10 million wasn't possible.

The PowerPoint presentation was over. Now was the time for the Qu0026A session.

Just like he expected, not a single question was being asked.

Li Tinghui had an awkward and bitter expression on his face.

He knew he was going to fail, but he didn't expect the investors to not ask a single question.

The staff member standing nearby knew that the investors weren't interested.

However, the staff member still asked, "Is anyone interested in investing?"

Like he expected, no one spoke.

The staff member gave a look of encouragement to Li Tinghui and was about to ask him to get off the stage. However, a clear voice came from the back row.

"I'm investing."

953 I'm Investing!

The entire conference room was quiet.

Including the person on stage.

"... Your project is interesting, yeah, I think it's good."

Everyone in the conference room was staring at Lu Zhou. Lu Zhou was about to explain why he thought the project was good, but he didn't know what to say.

After a couple of seconds, he cursed in his mind and said, "I think your PowerPoint is interesting, but 5 million is not going to be enough." Lu Zhou then added, "I'll invest 10 million just for starters."

10 million!

There was a huge commotion in the conference room.

For those investors, 10 million wasn't a lot of money, but it wasn't insignificant either.

What confused them the most was how this project was even worth 10 million in the first place?

However, Lu Zhou sat back down without explaining anything. The guy on stage was muddled.

Is this guy going to invest without asking any questions?

Shouldn't he at least ask about the company's current operations?

That will give me a chance to go through my PowerPoint again...

However, Lu Zhou didn't ask any questions.

Li Tinghui couldn't help but wonder if this guy was screwing with him...

10 million for this project?

Whose dumb*ss kid is this?

General Manager Zhang from Changjiang Capital was sitting in the front row. Seeing how someone was willing to invest in this piece of crap, he frowned and looked toward the back.

He then realized that the guy standing up in the back row looked familiar.

Who is that?

He looked at his assistant, who was sitting next to him.

"Xiao Yang, take a look at that guy, I feel like... he looks familiar."

The assistant looked at Lu Zhou for a while. He pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and looked surprised.

He obviously felt that Lu Zhou looked familiar as well, but he couldn't recognize him.

However, an image suddenly flashed through his mind, and his eyes widened as he spoke.

"Zhang, Mr. Zhang..."

Manager Zhang immediately said, "You know who that is?"

"He's Lu Zhou! Academician Lu!"

Manager Zhang's hand immediately went up in the air.

“Changjiang Capital is investing!”

However, his reaction was too slow.

He wasn't the only one who recognized Lu Zhou.

“That's Lu Zhou?!”

“F*ck, what is he doing here? I didn't know he's attending this summit? I just heard that the female CEO from Star Sky Technology is coming... Why is Academician Lu here?”

“Charging station... Nuclear fusion... I think I know what is going on.”

“Star Sky Technology plans on developing electric chargers! Oh my god, how did I not know about this?”

Three other hands were up in the air.

“Haitian Venture Capital is willing to invest 5 million! 10 million is not going to be enough, you should be targeting China Guodian Corporation! We will help you complete your series A financing! But we want more equity!”

“Manager Yang, if 10 million is not enough, what is 5 million going to do? We're willing to invest 10 million! We just want equity, you'll have total control over the business operations! We can help you finance your series A as well!”

“Yifang Venture Capital is willing to invest 15 million!”

“I want to invest as well!”

The conference room was in chaos.

A second ago, these investment companies thought this project was a piece of garbage. But now, they were fighting over the opportunity to invest.

The host was dumbfounded.

None of the investors were asking questions; instead, they were presenting ideas to the young entrepreneur. Everything from taking the company to public to initial product production.

This was the first time the host had seen something like this.

Not only was the host dumbfounded, but Li Tinghui was also muddled.

At first, no one was planning on investing; no one even asked about the business plan. He was ready to accept failure, but now, the situation had totally changed?!

All of this happened because the person in the back row wanted to invest 10 million.

In the midst of the noisy investors, he was able to finally recognize the man sitting in the back row...

Honestly speaking, Li Tinghui didn't know a lot about Lu Zhou, so he didn't pay attention to the news.

However, he heard his supervisor talk about Lu Zhou a couple of years ago...

Back then, the Pangu reactor hadn't been built yet, and majoring in electrical engineering wasn't nearly as popular. His supervisor was just a normal electrical engineering professor. However, an invitation sent from the Academy of Engineering invited his supervisor on a secret mission to Haizhou...

His supervisor helped build the first controllable nuclear fusion reactor.

Li Tinghui wasn't the only person who was shocked.

The person who was surprised the most was Lu Zhou.

The f*ck, I thought you idiots didn't want to invest?

Why are you trying to steal this from me?

This was the first time Lu Zhou experienced something like this outside of academic conferences...

Actually, this had nothing to do with the technology of the company.

After all, he couldn't come up with a single reason on why this was a good investment. He just thought the kid reminded him of himself, so he decided to throw in some money.

Zhongshan New Materials, which was controlled by Star Sky Technology, had its own battery production business anyway. Zhongshan New Materials worked with many electric vehicle companies and batteries that were downstream in the supply chain. He might even be able to compete against Elon Musk in the Yangtze River Delta City group charging station market.

Xiang Hongchuan, the partner from Zhujiang Venture Capital who was sitting next to Lu Zhou, finally realized what was happening. He politely smiled at Lu Zhou.

There was no chance for a small player like him to grab a piece of the pie.

“Um... Academician Lu, 10 million is quite a big investment, and it's risky. Maybe you should think about diversifying?”

“We happen to have some funds, maybe... think about it?”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Should I tell this guy to go f*ck himself?

I guess I'll keep my mouth shut for the sake of my reputation...

954 Terrible Guy!

What shocked Lu Zhou wasn't this guy's fake and two-faced personality.

But rather...

Do I look like I need help funding a measly 10 f*cking million?

“Come on, man, think about it. Zhujiang Venture Capital and Shanghai Electric Power Company have worked together before. We're a worthy teammate! We'll get rich together!”

Lu Zhou was amused.

What does the Shanghai Electric Power Company have to do with this?

I own part of the f*cking East Asia Energy.

“Xiang Hongchuan.”

“Yeah!” the man said with a smile on his face.

Lu Zhou sighed and said, “Since you’re so eager to be on this project, how about I’ll let you invest the entire 10 million?”

Xiang Hongchuan’s smile disappeared, and he quickly spoke apologetically.

“Oh, sorry, sorry! I misspoke, it’s all yours, we’ll just wait for the next presenter...”

Investing the entire 10 million on our own?

Forget about it, without Lu Zhou’s investment, this project is a piece of garbage.

I wouldn’t even invest a million dollars into this project on my own...

Xiang Hongchuan saw Lu Zhou getting annoyed, and he started to get scared.

The big investors in the front row were still fighting over this project. If Lu Zhou lost interest in this project because of him, the big investors would hate Xiang Hongchuan forever.

The opportunity was right in front of Xiang Hongchuan, yet there was nothing he could do. He felt like there were ants crawling all over his body.

However, he suddenly had an idea. He quietly took out his phone and sent a text to his investment assistant.

[Pay attention to public charging station companies in Shanghai, as well as Zhongshan New Materials...

[Buy as much stock as you can!]

...

With more than a dozen companies giving their offers, Li Tinghui contemplated for a bit and chose Lu Zhou in the end.

Honestly speaking, Lu Zhou's offer was the weakest. All he said was "I'm investing". However, Li Tinghui clearly knew that before Lu Zhou gave out his offer, none of the venture capital companies wanted to give him funding.

The actions of these sleazy businessmen made it easy for him to choose Lu Zhou's offer.

After politely declining the financing offers from other companies, Li Tinghui and Lu Zhou signed a letter of intent, settling the matter.

Lu Zhou said that someone from Star Sky Technology would take care of the equity ratios.

Even though the letter of intent wasn't legally binding, Li Tinghui was confident that Lu Zhou wouldn't bail on him.

After all, Lu Zhou was a world-famous academician, and there was no reason for Lu Zhou to hurt Li Tinghui. Also, even if Lu Zhou did bail on him, he would have bragging rights...

He could easily say something like, "I worked with Professor Lu on an electrical engineer project... but it didn't work out."

Just by saying that, he would earn the respect of everyone in the room.

After signing the letter of intent, Lu Zhou was getting bored of the investment pitches. He looked at his watch and saw that he had to meet with Chen Yushan in around ten minutes. Thus, he walked out of the conference room.

Li Tinghui was following Lu Zhou. Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something and spoke.

"Alibaba offered a pretty good financing plan, why didn't you choose them?"

Li Tinghui awkwardly smiled and spoke.

"Because you're my idol, you're the reason I was able to finish my master's! It is an honor working with you, I don't care about the money!"

Lu Zhou: "..."

Bullsh*t!

You didn't even recognize me, now you're claiming to be my superfan?

Lu Zhou thought for a second and spoke.

"You should end your angel round of financing, I advise you to keep your shares. No matter what price other companies are willing to pay, do not sell, especially not to Elon Musk.

"Of course, I'm not asking you to work for free. When it's the right time for series A, it'll be fine to sell some shares, but only to domestic companies. If Elon wants to buy your shares, he'll have to wait for you to go public."

Lu Zhou wasn't usually interested in going public since Star Sky Technology's main business model relied on patents, which didn't need to expand its business by going public. However, it was wise for companies that Star Sky Technology invested in to go public.

Therefore, even though going public wasn't the goal, if the right opportunity came, Lu Zhou wouldn't stop it from going public. It was smart to bring in more partners for this charging station company, as long as they avoided foreign investment.

Li Tinghui nodded like a child and said, "Don't worry! I will never sell out before going public! At most, I'll dilute the stock for financing!"

Lu Zhou nodded.

"That's up to you."

Li Tinghui, who was walking next to Lu Zhou, suddenly realized something strange, so he curiously asked, "Um, Academician Lu, why are you so against... Elon Musk?"

Lu Zhou was too lazy to explain in detail.

"Because he's a terrible guy."

Li Tinghui: "...?"

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something and spoke.

"Oh yeah, what is your company's name?"

It was like Lu Zhou dropped a bombshell on Li Tinghui.

You're investing 10 million, and you don't know my company's name...

Of course, he didn't say this out loud. He awkwardly smiled and spoke.

"It's called Beep Beep Charging, like the beeping of charging sound."

"Beep Beep Charging?" Lu Zhou cringed and said, "Okay, it's not bad."

Li Tinghui: "Yeah, that's not important, it's just the company's name. If you don't think it's good, we can change it—"

"No, it's fine, the name is good." Lu Zhou waved his hand and said, "Just keep using it."

955 Whoever Masters Electricity Will Master the Future!

Oriental Pearl TV Tower.

At the revolving restaurant on the top floor.

With a waitress following them, two people walked into the restaurant and sat down by the window.

After being at the summit all day, Lu Zhou was starving. He stood up and immediately went to the buffet area.

The food here was quite good for a buffet. It wasn't as good as five-star hotels, but it was decent.

The only thing that Lu Zhou disliked was that the drinks here were charged separately, and the only free drink was water.

The hell is this?

Are they afraid of guests drinking too much and puking in the toilets?

Even though Lu Zhou didn't really care about the money, this still triggered him a little.

After grabbing his food, Lu Zhou walked through the crowd and sat back down. He began shoving his mouth with rice as he looked at the Shanghai skyline.

After chewing for a while, he gave this restaurant an evaluation.

"Ten out of ten for views, four out of ten for food."

Chen Yushan looked at Lu Zhou's serious face and smiled.

"We're here for the view, not the food. It's about the ambiance."

She gently spooned a bite of ice cream into her mouth. Her eyes suddenly lit up when she tasted the sweetness.

"Wow! The ice cream here is amazing!"

Lu Zhou looked at the ice cream and said, "It's just normal ice cream."

He noticed the ice cream when he was getting his food. It didn't look particularly desirable. He even wondered if the restaurant wanted the guests to melt the ice cream and use that as a drink since the restaurant was too cheap to offer real drinks...

Chen Yushan pouted and disagreed.

"No! It's great, do you want some? I'll feed it to you."

"What?"

Before Lu Zhou could react, a plastic spoon flew into his mouth...

Honestly speaking, the sweet and cold sensation in his mouth felt pretty good, but he was too shocked to appreciate the taste...

Chen Yushan mischievously smiled and said, "How is it? It's great, right?"

Lu Zhou covered his mouth and looked to be in pain as he said, "You stabbed my teeth."

“Oh, sorry... I’ll rub it for you.”

Chen Yushan was about to reach over, but Lu Zhou quickly stopped her.

“No, no, it’s fine.”

Even though his tooth was slightly aching, that didn’t affect Lu Zhou’s dining experience. His mouth felt a little painful at first, but he soon felt better.

Watching the night view outside while eating was quite enjoyable.

When Lu Zhou was halfway done with his meal, he still felt bitter about this buffet not serving drinks.

“The food here is average, it just went from a four to a three.”

Seeing how Lu Zhou was still being serious, Chen Yushan said, “Okay, okay, stop talking about the food, this is just a tourist attraction... Speaking of which, why are you only eating the fried rice?”

“I’m not, I always eat fried rice at buffets.” Lu Zhou began to talk about his buffet research findings. “Ok, basically, if a buffet has good fried rice, it is a good buffet.”

Chen Yushan said, “What kind of logic is that?”

“It’s science, it’s like that saying, ‘you’re only as good as your worst work’, and fried rice is usually the worst dish... The food here isn’t as good as Xinrui or Sheraton.”

“Xinrui?” Chen Yushan blinked and said, “When did you go to Xinrui? I’ve never heard you talk about it.”

Lu Zhou wiped his mouth with a napkin and said, “Oh yeah, I went there yesterday for this macroeconomics conference.”

Chen Yushan’s eyes widened as she asked, “You’re doing research in economics?”

Lu Zhou: “Actually, I’m not doing research, Xiao Tong is. She just needs some help in mathematics.”

But then again, isn’t Krugman supposed to help Xiao Tong himself?

Whatever, it only took me a couple of hours anyway.

“Oh, Xiao Tong...” Chen Yushan looked outside the window and said, “I wonder if she’s doing well in Princeton. It’s quite lonely there.”

Lu Zhou said, “She’s doing great, she’s like me, able to thrive in any environment. She’s not that kind of spoiled basic girl.”

Chen Yushan smiled and said, “Oh... I thought that with a brother like you, she would be quite spoiled by you.”

Lu Zhou sighed and said, “She used to be. I used to pick her up in the rain, but now, she’s all grown up...”

“Does that make you sad?”

“Not really, just nostalgic.”

Lu Zhou suddenly remembered something, so he spoke.

“Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you, I went to watch the startup pitches this afternoon. I saw a pretty good project, so I invested in it.”

Chen Yushan: “What project?”

Lu Zhou: “It’s called Beep Beep Charging, it does electric vehicle charging stations.”

“Pft...” Chen Yushan couldn’t help but chuckle. “What kind of name is that?”

“It’s supposed to be a wireless charging station, you know what this means, right?”

“Sounds interesting, how much did you invest?”

“It was just an angel round, not much, just 10 million.”

“Not much...” Chen Yushan sighed and said, “Next time, at least tell me before you make a big investment.”

Big investment? How is this big?

Lu Zhou was confused.

Chen Yushan sighed and said, "Regardless of how well Star Sky Technology is doing, 10 million is still quite a big number. We're a business, not a charity. How do you know they're not going to waste your money?"

Lu Zhou: "Don't worry, the kid looked quite reliable."

Chen Yushan sighed and said, "It's not about being reliable. Charging stations is part of my plan, but it's not suitable for a startup. I would've preferred to acquire a more mature business, then we could help expand more easily... But startups have their advantages, it's more flexible..."

When it came to talking about business, it was like Chen Yushan turned into a completely different person. She tapped her finger on the table and looked like she was the leader of a country.

But then again, she was the CEO of a huge company...

Chen Yushan suddenly realized something and spoke.

"Oh yeah, what was the wireless charging station about?"

Lu Zhou: "According to the founder, he plans on building charging stations directly into car parking spaces... Basically, it means the car parking space will be one big wireless charger."

Chen Yushan: "Does that mean the battery will have to be modified?"

Lu Zhou thought about it and said, "Or you could put a receiver in the battery."

Chen Yushan: "Sounds interesting... Is it feasible?"

Lu Zhou: "I think it's quite easy to do, but that's just my opinion... I'll ask some people from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. I think there are some experts in this area."

Chen Yushan: "Okay then, as long as you think it'll work. I'll send someone for the financing negotiations. But we have to invest in electricity, whether it's buying startups or acquiring mature businesses. And not just charging stations, everything else as well!"

Lu Zhou: "Everything else?"

“Yeah!” Chen Yushan confidently said, “Whoever masters electricity will master the future!”

Chapter 956 A Couple Billion?

The ILHCRC unveiling ceremony and the department meetings were over. However, Luo Wenxuan was forced to stay in Shanghai and attend a certain number of meetings each month. Lu Zhou’s work with the ILHCRC was finally over, for now.

As for the High-Tech Innovation and Investment Summit...

He was just there to look around, he didn’t expect to invest in anything. The financing side of Beep Beep Charging would be taken over by Star Sky Technology. Lu Zhou was too lazy to care about the business side, so he handed it over to Chen Yushan.

His fifth day in Shanghai.

On the first Monday in March, Lu Zhou checked out of his hotel room and went outside the hotel entrance while holding his computer bag.

The rest of his luggage was already in the car, thanks to Wang Peng.

When he opened the car door, his phone in his pocket began to ring.

“Give me a second.”

Lu Zhou threw the computer bag in the car and took out his phone. He answered the call and heard Chen Yushan’s voice.

“I saw your friends’ news feed, you plan on going back to Jinling?”

Chen Yushan obviously didn’t expect him to leave so soon.

“Yeah, I’m already in the car, I’m getting on the train in two hours.”

“Why are you in such a rush?” Chen Yushan said in a saddened voice. She continued, “You’re always stuck indoors, I was going to take you shopping.”

Lu Zhou: "There's nothing to shop for, I feel like every big city is the same. Plus I can't just waste my time in Shanghai, I have a lot to do when I get back."

Even though he was done with the ILHCRC, he still had a lot of scientific research to do.

He especially had to research Riemann's hypothesis, it was already March, only five months left until the International Congress of Mathematicians in St. Petersburg.

Even though he had seen some success from his research, he didn't know how far he was from the finish line.

This type of situation was quite unusual for him. Normally, once he found a possible proof pathway, he would enter a positive feedback loop and solve the problem soon after.

If everything went well and there was nothing else he needed to do in Jinling, he planned on going on a research retreat.

The kind of retreat that was measured in months.

"What do you mean!" Chen Yushan was annoyed at Lu Zhou's attitude, and she angrily said, "Does Jinling have a Disney World? No! Does Jinling have an Expo Exhibition Center? No! There's so much to do at The Bund."

Disney World...

Lu Zhou didn't know what to say.

"Disney... is for kids."

The other end of the phone went silent.

After a couple of seconds, she sighed.

"Oh my god, you haven't changed at all."

Lu Zhou didn't know what she meant.

"... What do you mean?"

“You’re the kind of person who goes on a movie date and buys two different movie tickets!”

After that, she hung up the phone.

Lu Zhou: “...”

Did I say something wrong?

But she doesn’t sound too angry...

Lu Zhou shook his head and put his phone back into his pocket.

Screw it, who cares.

...

While Lu Zhou was returning to Jinling from Shanghai, the Shanghai financial world was going through a volatile time.

News broke out that Academician Lu invested 10 million into a startup at the high-tech summit. The startup specialized in wireless vehicle charging stations.

Then it was reported that all of the major investment banks and venture capital funds were fighting at the scene, trying to invest as well.

After all, Star Sky Technology wasn’t public, so investors couldn’t invest in it. However, investors saw an opportunity.

Even though Star Sky Technology wasn’t public, the other venture capital companies at the summit were public!

This charging station company, backed by Star Sky Technology, was bound to receive more financing eventually. And who were they going to get funded by? The investment and venture capital funds!

In their eyes, Beep Beep Charging was definitely going public eventually!

As long as Star Sky Technology wanted to take this company public, the China Securities Regulatory Commission would bend over backward for them!

The only difference was whether they were going to invest in Beep Beep Charging in the form of A-shares or H-shares!

While the discussion was brewing, Zhujiang Industrial, the parent company of Zhujiang Venture Capital, suddenly released an announcement through the CSRC, stating that it had no plans on entering the charging station industry, and it was not involved in the financing of Beep Beep Charging, nor did it conduct any form of insider trading...

As soon as this announcement came out, the investors instantly froze.

Most people didn't care about this company, but this announcement was a little suspicious.

If you're really not involved, why would you make that announcement?

No one is talking about you anyway...

Unless...

You guys are guilty! Maybe I should invest in Zhujiang Industrial, since they're financing a company that is backed by Lu Zhou himself!

At nine-thirty in the morning, the stock market opened. The Zhujiang Industrial stock price rose to crazy high amounts, hitting the daily limit.

The investors who were watching the market realized what was going on. They didn't want to be left out, so they began entering crazy high bids.

And it wasn't just Zhujiang Industrial, any venture capital company that went to the summit had their stock prices rise to the moon.

In addition to these venture capital companies, many people had invested in Zhongshan New Materials, which was controlled by Star Sky Technology.

This showed that investors were illogical creatures, despite every reason for them not to be.

Regardless of whether or not there was conclusive evidence, the trades pushed the price of Zhongshan New Materials to its daily trading limit.

Liu Wanshan, who just woke up, had no idea why his market cap had increased by hundreds of millions of yuan. After asking around, he realized this was all because of Lu Zhou.

This crazy volatile investing period lasted for a full week.

People joked that Professor Lu raised his hand and was able to create billions of market cap value out of thin air.

Even though this wasn't Lu Zhou's personal doings, he still left behind a legend in the financial industry...

957 Win a Gold Medal First!

The news of Star Sky Technology investing in Beep Beep Charging affected more than just the financial industry, the electric energy and charging station industry also caught wind of the news.

Almost as soon as the stock price for several venture capital companies rose to the sky, Bobby found Elon, who was representing Space-X at the summit.

"Sir, Star Sky Technology seems to have acquired a charging station company called Beep Beep Charging. They plan on competing against us."

Elon: "..."

As he squeezed the glass in his hand tightly, he could feel his blood pressure going up.

F*ck sake!

Does this f*cking guy want to go to war with me?

First lithium-sulfur batteries, then aerospace, I mean, he has a total monopoly on lunar transfer orbit launches.

Now he plans on competing with me on charging stations for the Yangtze River Delta City group?

Is this guy obsessed with me?

Elon took a deep breath and tried to calm himself down. He let go of the glass in his hand and slowly said, “I don’t care... Just follow our plan.

“Tesla’s brand image means we’ll have an advantage. Star Sky Technology has the rights to the patents, which is quite annoying, but charging stations are different from lithium-sulfur batteries. This is our playground, not theirs!”

Elon knew that Star Sky Technology was a powerful company, and the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had good research and development capabilities. However, that didn’t mean he was going to lose to them in the field of electric vehicle charging stations!

Charging stations didn’t require any highly advanced technology; there were only two relevant factors—area coverage and compatibility! There was no reason for them to lose the battle.

Why do I feel like Elon is always overly optimistic?

Bobby agreed with Elon, but he still said truthfully, “True, but according to my investigation, they’re planning on integrating wireless charging stations... Maybe they’re not a concern, but I have to say we should pay attention to them.”

“Wireless charging stations?”

Elon sneered and had a disapproving look on his face.

“Lu Zhou is an excellent scholar, but I have to say he has no idea what he is doing. Even if wireless charging technology catches up in charging speed, it will require the battery manufacturers’ cooperation. This means they’ll have to change the entire electric vehicle supply chain! What a joke.”

Do you know how many car manufacturers there are?

How many battery manufacturers?

Charging stations are just an accessory for new electric vehicles, so a good charging station company should install more interfaces to be compatible with different car manufacturers.

But you want other car manufacturers to comply with your standards?

Not to mention that you're not even in the automobile industry? Why would anyone listen to you?

Forget about foreign cars, Tesla will never cooperate with you!

Elon slowly smirked.

Good!

If Lu Zhou wants to go to war on charging stations, then we'll go to war... I'm confident I'll teach him a lesson.

...

If Lu Zhou was next to Elon, he wouldn't know whether to laugh or cry, because Elon totally misinterpreted his plan.

However, Elon's idea irritated him. After all, letting a foreign guy come to China and sell China's electricity back to the Chinese people was a little unacceptable...

But honestly, Lu Zhou never viewed Elon as a serious opponent.

Lu Zhou was on the high-speed rail back to Jinling, and he used this free time to go through his notes on Riemann's hypothesis. Suddenly, he received an email on his computer.

The email sender's address was unfamiliar, but the content was oddly familiar...

[Sir! I passed the first selection round, I'm in the national reserve team!]

Without looking at the name, Lu Zhou already knew this email was from Li Mo. He guessed that Li Mo probably found his email from the Jin Ling University website.

He would often receive emails from students that asked to study a master's or PhD under him.

Lu Zhou looked at the email and smiled.

Getting in the national reserve team is nothing to brag about, the second round of selection hasn't even begun. Only six people make it to the international stage.

And a gold medal...

Is not easy.

Anyone in the national reserve team, regardless of whether they made the IMO team, would easily be able to get into Yan University or Shuimu University.

For most people, this was quite an impressive achievement.

However, having said that, this type of achievement was nothing worthy to be bragged about. Mathematics was about patience and tenacity, and arrogance was its worst enemy.

If this guy can stay humble, he might be able to make something of himself.

Lu Zhou put down his pen and began typing a reply on his laptop.

[Come brag to me when you have a gold medal!]

This kid needs a better character!

Ten minutes later, the business class crew members reminded the passengers that their trip would soon come to an end. Lu Zhou put away his computer and notes on Riemann's hypothesis, then got off the train with Wang Peng.

After getting into the car, Wang Peng suddenly received a phone call. After hanging up, he turned toward Lu Zhou, who was sitting in the backseat, and said, "The higher-ups want me to ask you if you're going to the International Congress of Mathematicians?"

Lu Zhou: "I haven't decided, why?"

Wang Peng said, "Normally speaking, when an important person attends an international event, we have to coordinate with the security department of the foreign country and make sure the security is foolproof."

Lu Zhou said, "Is it that serious?"

Even though he knew he was an important figure, he didn't expect the state to prepare security months in advance just for him to attend an academic conference.

Wang Peng shook his head and said, "This is serious, so we have to take all necessary preventative measures. After all, you know how the current international situation is. It's better to be safe than sorry."

Lu Zhou looked at the notes in his hand and contemplated it for a while.

"If I do end up going, how soon do I need to tell you?"

"At least a week in advance, but I suggest two months."

Lu Zhou nodded.

"Okay, I'll give you an answer by June."

958 A Life of Mathematics!

It had been two days since Lu Zhou returned from Shanghai.

At his Zhongshan International mansion.

Lu Zhou was in his study room on the second floor. He was reading his research draft papers when he suddenly saw a video call pop up on his laptop.

When Lu Zhou noticed that Xiao Tong was the one calling, he clicked with his mouse and accepted the call.

Soon after, an excited and bubbly face appeared on his screen.

"Brother, you're popping off!"

Lu Zhou didn't know what was so exciting, so he paused for a second and spoke.

"I... What?"

Xiao Tong: "Remember that thesis you gave me a few days ago? Professor Krugman did a report for you. Now the entire economics world is researching your L-Z model! Your model is trending on Twitter!"

Lu Zhou: "L... Z?"

Xiao Tong excitedly said, "Yeah! Professor Joseph named it himself!"

Lu Zhou: "..."

F*ck sake!

These economists really are horrible at naming things.

I wasn't expecting this...

Lu Zhou coughed and said, "This is what you're excited about?"

"What is that supposed to mean? This is amazing! Also," Xiao Tong crossed her legs and said with a mysterious face, "apparently, someone sent a recommendation letter to the Nobel committee, so you might win a Nobel Prize in economics!"

Seeing how ecstatic Xiao Tong was, Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Lil Sis, you should focus on your own studies... I would rather win a Nobel Prize in Physics than one in economics. But then again, it's not that easy winning two Nobel Prizes."

Xiao Tong pouted and said, "Oh, sorry, I'm sorry for caring about you."

Lu Zhou said, "Okay, fine, go do your own thing. I'm busy, I don't have so much free time like you."

Xiao Tong frowned and said, "I don't have any free time! I'm busy as well! I just got back to Princeton, and Professor Krugman gave me a bunch of tasks! I have to read two papers a day and write a bunch of notes... I've been in school for less than two weeks! This is horrible!"

Lu Zhou was amused, and he said, "I'll introduce you to some of my students. After looking at their workload, you'll never complain again."

Your supervisor assigning you tasks means they're interested in teaching you. Would you prefer him to assign you brainless and repetitive work?

It seemed like Professor Krugman was quite serious about educating and cultivating Xiao Tong. Lu Zhou would never forget that.

After some small talk, Lu Zhou hung up the video call and placed his attention back onto his thesis.

As he looked at the densely packed equations, he felt a headache and sighed heavily.

“I won’t be able to finish before June...”

“Sigh, if only Riemann’s hypothesis is as simple as the L-Z model.”

I was looking forward to the conference at St. Petersburg.

Lu Zhou already chose to do a 60-minute report on Riemann’s hypothesis. If he wasn’t able to present any meaningful research for his report, the mathematics community would still respect him, but he wouldn’t be able to respect himself.

Lu Zhou shook his head and placed his attention back on solving this century-old mathematics problem...

...

While Lu Zhou was busy researching mathematics, Li Tinghui, who was all the way in Star Sky Technology’s Shanghai office, received the first financing contract of his life.

However, he didn’t love the contract...

He finished reading the contract from beginning to end. He reluctantly looked at the female CEO sitting across from him.

“Sixty percent... Isn’t that a bit high?”

Very few startups would give up sixty percent of the equity in their angel financing round, even thirty percent was unusually high.

Signing this contract meant that he would lose his majority shareholder status and give control of his company to Star Sky Technology. Not just that, but this would hugely impact his future financing rounds.

No venture capital firm would invest in a startup whose founders had lost control of their own company. Unless Star Sky Technology had no plans on future financing rounds.

Chen Yushan gave a curt reply to Li Tinghui's question.

"I think this is the most appropriate arrangement. We will not negotiate."

Li Tinghui said, "But Beep Beep Charging has an independent research and development team..."

Chen Yushan took a sip of tea and spoke.

"Oh, really? How does it compare to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study?"

Li Tinghui was intimidated by the CEO, so he had nothing to say.

Chen Yushan tapped her finger on the desk and spoke.

"I don't agree with Academician Lu's opinion. He's not a good businessman. In my opinion, this is straight-up a charity."

The guy looked around nervously as she continued, "We can do the research and development on wireless charging station technology ourselves. Our relationship with the Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang states are good. We can totally do this on our own."

Chen Yushan smiled and said in a serious way, "What do you think? Want to come work for Star Sky Technology for half a million yuan a year?"

Chen Yushan's charming smile was layered with a hint of devilish gaze.

Li Tinghui knew that this wasn't charity; however, he didn't expect her proposal to be so aggressive.

"Oh, Ms. Chen..."

Li Tinghui took a deep breath and hesitated before finally signing his name.

He had no other choice.

Even though the sacrifice was huge.

The resources from Star Sky Technology were too good to refuse.

Whether it was their connections with the state or their research and development power, like Ms. Chen said, Star Sky Technology could easily create their own wireless charging company themselves.

I knew it...

I'm in no position to negotiate.

As Chen Yushan watched Li Tinghui sign his name, she nodded with approval.

"Good, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study will set up an independent research institute on wireless charging stations. Arrange for your research team to move to Jinling. As for the people that don't want to reallocate, fire them.

"As for you, I need you to stay in Shanghai. Move your management team from the small suburban office to the city center."

"But—"

Before he could finish, Chen Yushan said, "This is your problem, I'm only responsible for giving you the necessary resources. Moving your offices next to ours is beneficial for you."

This woman is the devil...

Li Tinghui sighed heavily and nodded. He carefully put away the contract and left the office.

He hoped that his decision was correct.

He hoped that he wouldn't regret this someday...

Chen Yushan smiled and shook his head.

He's too naive.

Star Sky Technology had the capabilities to start a charging station division, but being capable didn't mean they were willing.

If Li Tinghui did his homework, he would've found out that Star Sky Technology's main business model was patent management. They had more important things to take care of such as the space shuttle assembly center; they didn't have time to deploy some wireless charging stations in the Yangtze River Delta city group.

Therefore, acquiring a charging station company was their best option.

This was the same reason why Star Sky Technology didn't produce electric cars or lithium-sulfur batteries. Why would they take on unnecessary risk when they could just sit back and collect patent fees?

She totally lied about "disagreeing with Academician Lu", and "can start a wireless charging station company on our own".

Of course, even if Li Tinghui realized this, he had no other option.

After all, the resources of Star Sky Technology was precisely what he needed. On the other hand, Star Sky Technology didn't need them.

"Sigh, I want to go back to the head office... The traffic and air qualities here are much worse than Jinling."

Chen Yushan tidied up the documents on the conference table and stretched her arms. She then rested her head on the table.

She sighed and quietly whispered, "That b*stard, he didn't even call me when he arrived."

"He's probably on another retreat again."

"He's going to live with mathematics for the rest of his life!"

959 Porous Silicon-Based Molecular Exchange Membrane

In fact, Chen Yushan was wrong this time.

After Lu Zhou returned to Jinling, he did plan on going on another retreat, and he didn't want to leave his house until he solved Riemann's hypothesis. However, he had too much responsibility.

Yang Xu, the director of the Institute of Computational Materials, called him for help.

He called about the lithium-air battery project, which was established a couple of years ago.

Lu Zhou was quite surprised. Up until the end of last year, the reports from the Institute of Computational Materials showed that they had been making significant progress in the research of lithium-air batteries.

However, it seemed like everything was going downhill this year?

Wang Peng drove Lu Zhou to the Institute for Advanced Study, and the second Lu Zhou stepped into the laboratory, Yang Xu grabbed his arm and cried for help.

"Please help me! I can't... do this anymore!"

"Shut up, speak properly. I'm here. It's not like you're on your deathbed, tell me what's wrong, I'll see if I can help..."

Lu Zhou was shocked at Yang Xu's mental state.

After becoming the director of the Institute of Computational Materials, he had led many successful projects and solved many materials science research problems.

It wasn't unusual for a guy like him, who was at the cutting-edge of scientific research, to encounter difficult problems, but this time felt different...

Honestly, Lu Zhou was curious as to what kind of problem could torment this guy to this level.

Yang Xu: "Remember that porous silicon molecular exchange membrane I mentioned in the research progress report a while back?"

Lu Zhou thought back to the report and nodded.

"I think so."

Yang Xu sighed and said, “Well, according to our experimental analysis, we found that when this kind of porous silicon material is placed under a certain pressure difference, the gas molecules on the high-pressure side slowly transport molecules of a specific diameter to the low-pressure side. Our project team immediately followed up on this research and made an exchange membrane capable of screening gas molecules in the 3.4-3.5Å diameter range.”

Lu Zhou: “Isn’t that a good thing?”

The diameter of the oxygen molecule was 3.46Å, which happened to be within this range. Even though argon gas molecules had a diameter of 3.4Å, which was also within the screening range, argon was rarely found in nature, so it didn’t have a significant effect.

“It’s not good at all.” Yang Xu frowned and shook his head. He then said, “The upper and lower boundaries of the screening range aren’t fixed; they change with pressure... Do you see what I’m trying to say?”

Lu Zhou had an expression of realization.

“Oh, I see, I see where the problem is.”

Basically, this porous silicon-based molecular exchange membrane was like a flexible fishing net. When the fishing net expanded, so did the fishing net holes...

Therefore, the only solution was to maintain constant air pressure on both sides, to ensure only oxygen molecules could pass through the membrane...

But that was obviously impossible.

Yang Xu made it clear that the screening range changed linearly with the pressure difference between the two sides.

Forget about the technical costs of maintaining air pressure to such a precise level, from a safety point of view, it was dangerous to allow a redox reaction to happen in unstable oxygen levels.

Lithium metal was no joke, it could spontaneously explode at any time!

If there was any amount of contamination, they would have a bomb on their hands.

“We’ve been stuck here for half a year.” Yang Xu shook his head and said, “We tried everything we could.”

Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “Do you have any simulations? Let me see.”

“Follow me.”

Yang Xu walked next to a computer and clicked the mouse. Soon after, a three-dimensional composition image of a silicon-based molecular exchange membrane with a porous network structure was presented on the screen in front of Lu Zhou.

Yang Xu pointed at the picture on the screen and spoke.

“We’ve tried to increase the surface pressure on one side of the exchange membrane, which causes molecules of a certain diameter to pass through the molecular exchange membrane at a constant rate...”

Yang Xu clicked on the mouse again.

Green and red dots appeared on the sides of the molecular exchange membrane, and they began to gather toward the surface of the membrane.

“... When the surface pressure of the membrane reaches level A, oxygen molecules begin to move through the molecular exchange membrane, to the lithium-air battery gas exchange chamber. But when the surface pressure continues to increase, which increases the pressure difference, nitrogen will also start to pass through the exchange membrane...”

“However, while the pressure difference changes from A to B, a significant amount of nitrogen molecules have already slowly penetrated through the membrane.”

The red dots on the screen, which represented nitrogen molecules, had gone through the exchange membrane, making contact with the lithium anode.

Lu Zhou looked at Yang Xu’s software demonstration and had a dignified look on his face.

After the demonstration, Yang Xu sighed and sat in the computer chair.

“We have found solutions for water molecules, carbon dioxide, and even carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide molecules. But nitrogen... is too tricky. They’re like a bunch of flies, they’re impossible to catch.”

Even though nitrogen could be used as a protective gas in most situations, such as the food industry, it wasn’t applicable to lithium-air batteries. Mainly because the nitrogen would react with lithium, forming Li_3N .

If the nitrogen gas penetrated into the circulation system of the lithium-air battery, the entire battery would be destroyed within a few cycles.

The reason why lithium-air batteries were so difficult to produce was that lithium was highly reactive. The amount of impurities that needed to be eliminated was extremely high.

Back in the day, IBM’s famous Almaden laboratory tried to research lithium-air batteries. They even used some kind of distributed computing technology, positioning each oxygen atom precisely into the lithium anode...

The final result was obvious. They failed miserably.

Even the wealthy and powerful IBM had to cut off this money-burning project.

Even though the Institute of Computational Materials had found some amount of success with their research, if they couldn’t get rid of the impurities in the gas, their research would become totally useless.

Before asking Lu Zhou for help, Yang Xu and his lithium-air battery project team were stuck at this bottleneck for half a year. They hadn’t been able to make any progress.

Yang Xu knew that if he couldn’t solve this problem himself, no one else in the Institute for Advanced Study could, except the father of computational materials science—Professor Lu.

However, even though Lu Zhou was confident in his own abilities, he wasn’t able to find a solution.

He pondered for a long time and said, “I’ll take a look. If I find anything, I’ll tell you.”

Seeing how even Lu Zhou wasn't able to think of a solution, Yang Xu gradually lost hope.

"... Thank you."

Worse came to worst, he would have to give up on this technical route and begin researching other directions.

Lu Zhou didn't realize how hopeless Yang Xu was, so he awkwardly smiled and spoke.

"You're welcome..."

This research project could be worth billions, or even trillions!

I'm not interested in money, but this research project is valuable. It's worth a try...

960 Clues on the Debris!

Lu Zhou returned to his Zhongshan International mansion, carrying the hopes of the lithium-air battery research team on his shoulders.

However, when he was about to show off his talents, he realized a serious problem...

This thing was not easy to solve.

In fact, it was much more difficult than he had originally thought.

Lu Zhou looked at the computer on his desk while staring at the model he retrieved from the institute database. His right hand held a pen motionlessly.

After a while, he sighed and put down the pen.

"Gas molecular exchange membrane..."

"This is some high-tech stuff."

This technology would be valuable even if it wasn't applied to lithium-air batteries and only used to purify gas. So far, the most advanced gas

purification technology was pressure swing adsorption, but its extraction efficiency and purity were far from perfect...

Lu Zhou stood up and walked next to his bookshelf. He gently pulled a book sitting on the left side of the second row.

After a click sound, the drawer underneath the bookshelf moved slightly. Lu Zhou opened the drawer and took out a metal tube, which was around the size of a double-A battery.

Precisely speaking, this metal tube was destroyed by an unknown object.

The middle section of the metal tube was broken, and the battery was slightly bent. Other than the positive sign and negative sign markings, no other information could be seen on the battery.

As Lu Zhou gently rubbed the battery with his thumb, he had a thoughtful expression on his face.

"The answer should be inside this thing..."

This was his first debris.

The data scanned from the scanner gun was stored together with Xiao Ai inside the high-tech quantum computer.

However, even with the help of the scanner gun, it was quite difficult to completely restore the original state of the debris.

So far, the only technology he had recovered from this battery was the polymer material that solved the lithium dendrites problem, nothing related to the lithium-air battery.

In his opinion, if he himself couldn't solve the problem of lithium-air batteries, no one in the world could either.

"If only the molecular exchange membrane is still intact, even just a little bit..." Lu Zhou said as he stared at the broken battery.

Even if a little bit of the membrane survived, he could use the scanner gun to retrieve its composition. He might not be able to copy the design, but at least it would give him a point of reference.

But the problem was that...

“Wait a second...”

Lu Zhou stared at the battery, and suddenly, a light bulb went off in his head.

He immediately sat down at his computer and spoke.

“Xiao Ai, retrieve the scan information for Debris No.1 from the database!”

[Okay, Master! (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

A three-dimensional model soon appeared on Lu Zhou’s computer screen.

He stared at the scanned image of Debris No.1 on his screen. Despite having seen this model many times in the past, he still couldn’t help but feel amazed.

Because of his increased engineering level, he found a new level of appreciation for the advanced engineering design that went into this battery.

“This is incredible.”

As Lu Zhou stared at the delicate structure between the gas exchange chamber and the anode material, he couldn’t help but sigh.

A layer of molecular exchange membrane was placed between the gas exchange chamber and the gas inlet. The gas exchange chamber was filled with a high concentration of oxygen, and a layer of polymer material was then used to completely cover the lithium anode. Using a special method, pure oxygen molecules were transported to the negative electrode...

Star Sky Technology could recreate part of this design.

Of course, that was assuming they could find a solution to the molecular exchange membrane. Otherwise, no matter how clever their design was, the lithium-air battery would be useless.

Xiao Ai: [Master? 0.0]

“Nothing, I’m just surprised...”

Lu Zhou composed himself and said, "Xiao Ai, retrieve the material composition data for the negative electrode and gas exchange chamber!"

Xiao Ai: [Okay! Done! (๑•̥̥̥•̥̥̥) ✧]

Already?

Even though the data was already inside the database, Xiao Ai's speed of retrieval still surprised Lu Zhou a little.

However, now was not the time to think about that.

Lu Zhou stared at the chart in front of him and used his mouse to mark locations on the 3-D battery image. He carefully searched for locations of where the gas exchange membrane might have existed.

As expected, he found a suspicious clue.

"Interesting... There are no traces of silicon at all.

"The excessive trace of carbon residue should belong to the carbon nanospheres... Wait, not necessarily!" Lu Zhou thought about the carbon residue of the Debris No.3 Hall-effect thruster and said, "I understand now!"

Xiao Ai: [What? (°—° ")]

Lu Zhou took a deep breath and tried to contain his excitement. "Silicon is extremely stable, it's unlikely that there are no traces left behind in the debris. If there is no residue of silicon, that means... The molecular exchange membrane used on Debris No.1 wasn't a silicon-based substance at all!

"If we replace the silicon with carbon, it should fix the problem!"

Lu Zhou's mind was racing a million miles a minute. He took a piece of draft paper and grabbed a pen.

However, he suddenly noticed the Riemann zeta function he wrote on the draft paper.

Lu Zhou furrowed his eyebrows and clenched his jaws.

F*ck this, who cares!

I'll solve this first!

I swear, this is the last thing I'll solve before I devote myself entirely to Riemann's hypothesis!

Once this is over, no one is getting any help from me!

Chapter 961 All With Carbon!

Computational materials science didn't just come out of thin air.

Even Lu Zhou couldn't calculate what material should be used for the lithium-air battery molecular exchange membrane with just a pen and paper.

The correct procedure for solving computational materials science problems was to find a feasible pathway through experimentation, then establish a mathematical model. After that, he could use a powerful computer to calculate the nanoscopic interactions of the molecules.

Fortunately, Yang Xu had collected plenty of data.

Having the experimental data and Debris No.1 meant that Lu Zhou already had 30% of the answer.

Therefore, he had quite an advantage compared to other people.

Lu Zhou placed all of his attention on the problem. He meticulously looked through the experimental data and converted the data into the language of mathematics. Using his knowledge of computational materials science, he gradually placed the puzzle pieces together.

Everything was going smoothly.

It was as easy as breathing for him.

Even though he hadn't done any research in materials science ever since the controllable fusion engineering project, he wasn't rusty at all.

After all, he was the one that made the Theoretical Model of the Electrochemical Interface Structure, which swept the entire theoretical chemistry and materials science fields.

And it was precisely this theory that won him the Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Therefore, if he couldn't solve this, no one else could.

The tip of his pen danced on the draft paper, producing rows of neatly written equations.

[By using the Hartree equation...]

[...]

Lu Zhou was in the zone. He was inside a flow state where he was shielded from the outside world.

His pen was like a blade, cutting through the weeds of science...

"There's no need to explain the wave function for each particle movement.

"We just have to find the spatial wave function for the 3 variable particle density...

"If we can calculate all the particle systems, we can predict the physical property of the material!

"I haven't felt this happy in a while!"

Lu Zhou felt a wave of relief in his heart as he wrote down the last character and put down his pen.

I finally did it.

The sun was starting to rise outside his window.

Lu Zhou looked at the sunrise and took a breath of fresh air.

As the fresh morning breeze blew through his window, every pore in his body was soaked in ecstasy.

He stretched his back and felt a wave of tiredness in his brain. He pinched his eyebrows, then took out a bottle of Energy Medicine from the system space and drank it.

The cold liquid ran down his throat, and he felt his brain being rejuvenated.

His dark, heavy eye bags that accumulated from him staying up all night gradually went away.

“This thing is amazing.”

Lu Zhou looked at the small bottle in his hand and spoke.

“If only I could produce more...”

I wonder if I'll live long enough to see that happen.

Lu Zhou looked at the stack of papers, which were densely filled with calculations. He carefully read everything and made sure there were no problems.

The mathematical model was done.

And it was done using pen and paper.

And for the calculations, it was nothing a quantum computer couldn't solve!

“Xiao Ai.”

A string of bubbles popped up on the lower right corner.

[Xiao Ai is here, Master.]

“Help me with something.”

Lu Zhou tidied up the stack of draft papers and looked at the lines of equations. A smile slowly appeared on his face.

“I have some data and a model here.

“Analyze it for me.”

...

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

Institute of Computational Materials.

A group of people gathered around a piece of experimental equipment with a serious look on their faces.

A second ago, they were adjusting the pore size of the porous silicon-based molecular exchange membrane. However, neither the computer simulations nor the experiment test results met their expectations.

It seemed like the research on lithium-air batteries was in a dead end.

No matter how close they were to cracking the case, if they couldn't get rid of the nitrogen penetration problem, their research would be worthless...

Qian Zhongming, who was standing next to Yang Xu, broke the silence and said, "Maybe our thinking is wrong."

As Yang Xu stared at him, Qian Zhongming continued, "Adjusting the pore size might increase the permeability of oxygen molecules, but it doesn't help with the nitrogen molecules penetrating the membrane, maybe..."

He paused for a second and continued, "Maybe the idea of using a porous silicon-based molecular exchange membrane is wrong. It's infeasible."

The laboratory was dead silent.

This meant that the work they had done for the past two years was for nothing...

Yang Xu clenched his fist.

After a while, he took a deep breath and spoke.

"I'll try again, if it doesn't work..."

Even though every single cell in his body wanted to continue, he knew he couldn't stay on this research pathway forever. He was an institute director; he couldn't blindly allow his men to die on this pathway.

Maybe the team should take a vacation, relax a little, and think about how to write the ending report.

If this project is still alive, we should think about what other pathways we could pursue...

Suddenly, a voice came from the laboratory entrance.

“There’s no need, Mr. Qian is correct.”

Everyone watched Lu Zhou walk into the laboratory. He placed a USB on the table and spoke in a relaxed tone.

“At least, he’s half correct.”

Yang Xu looked at the USB and asked, “What is this?”

“It’s a molecular exchange membrane model, using a new material...”

Lu Zhou coughed and said, “Basically, I need you to replace all of the silicon in the membrane with carbon!”

Chapter 962 Finally Put It to Use!

All to...

Carbon?!

Yang Xu froze.

Qian Zhongming and Liu Bo also froze.

All of the researchers in the laboratory looked at Lu Zhou; they were in shock.

After a couple of seconds, Yang Xu broke the silence.

“Change it to... carbon?”

Yang Xu smiled and shook his head. “That’s impossible, we’ve tried it already. We even used a more flexible carbon-based material in the beginning. But we found out that carbon isn’t as stable as silicon.”

He paused for a second and casually joked, “I mean, we’re trying to build a lithium-air battery here, not a lithium bomb.”

However, no one in the laboratory laughed, including Yang Xu.

Everyone was feeling a bit down.

After all, this meant that their efforts over the past two years were for nothing.

“Because you didn’t use the right method...” Lu Zhou looked around and said, “Do you guys have a blackboard here?”

Yang Xu said, “We have a whiteboard... It’s behind you, what are you doing?”

Without explaining anything, Lu Zhou smiled and spoke.

“Whiteboard works.”

He turned around and faced the whiteboard. He picked up a marker, pondered for a few seconds, and began writing.

[Ethylene-propylene copolymer, 3,4-polyisoprene, polysulfone cross-linked block copolymer CBGC and its chemical modification CBGC-M...]

As the researchers in the laboratory looked at the organic compound names being written on the whiteboard, they felt totally confused.

Qian Zhongming leaned over and whispered to Liu Bo, “What is... Academician Lu doing?”

“This looks familiar...” Qian Zhongming was also confused. He frowned and said, “Maybe it’s the modified PDMS formula? But it doesn’t seem like it...”

The modified PDMS polymer wasn’t nearly as long; it was just two compounds combined together.

But it seemed like Lu Zhou was writing more than five compounds on the whiteboard...

Yang Xu stared at the long list of names on the whiteboard and also didn’t understand what was going on.

He knew what the compounds were.

He even had them in the laboratory.

But he didn’t know why Lu Zhou was writing them on the whiteboard.

When Lu Zhou stopped writing, Yang Xu couldn't help but ask, "What's this..."

"Mix these organic substances in a ratio to form a film." Lu Zhou threw the marker on the table and said, "Remember to use cold rolling."

Yang Xu stared at the long list of names on the whiteboard in disbelief.

He wasn't doubtful of Academician Lu's scientific research abilities.

It was just that...

Everything he thought he knew about computational materials science, was thrown out of the window.

"This is ridiculous, what could you possibly get from mixing all of these together? How are you going to control the dispersion? What about the stability between the compounds?"

Mixing these compounds would create a totally chaotic system!

Honestly...

How the hell did he come up with this list?

How does he plan on calculating the mixing ratios?

Not just that, but the mixing order and mixing method will also produce entirely different results.

Yang Xu looked at Lu Zhou, who was grinning from ear to ear. He took a deep breath and said, "It's not that I don't believe you, I just... How about this, I'll get my guys to model it."

"There's no need for that, I already did it." Lu Zhou pointed toward the USB and said, "The model is in there, and it's written on our own computational materials software. It should be compatible."

Yang Xu glanced at the USB. He didn't believe that Lu Zhou could finish such a huge amount of workload in such a short amount of time. He nodded suspiciously and said, "I'll try."

Yang Xu picked up the USB and plugged it into the computer. He opened the folder and began to run the model.

All of the researchers in the laboratory gathered around the computer as they nervously waited for the results of the calculations.

Lu Zhou, on the other hand, had already run the model on his quantum computer numerous times. Thus, he stood there totally relaxed.

Yang Xu looked at Lu Zhou and hesitated for a bit before asking, "Can I ask you something?"

Lu Zhou said, "What?"

Yang Xu: "... Did you create this model yesterday?"

Lu Zhou: "You could say so."

I didn't sleep all night, so technically I worked on it today.

Yang Xu looked like he just saw a ghost. Suddenly, the computer fans began to slow down.

The simulation was finished!

Everyone leaned toward the computer screen.

The second the results were presented on the screen, the researchers froze.

According to the simulation calculations, when the surface air pressure on one side of this carbon-based membrane reached point A, oxygen molecules began to move from one side to the other side.

After a simulation time of 24 hours, the purity of oxygen in the gas exchange chamber reached 98%! With a simulation time of 72 hours, this number fluctuated slightly within the range of 0.1%, but it stayed close to 98%.

From this aspect alone, the carbon-based molecular exchange membrane was already superior to the silicon-based molecular exchange membrane.

Their concerns regarding the chemical stability of carbon were also totally unnecessary. Basically, this polymer material, which was similar to the modified PDMS film, had extremely strong corrosion resistance properties...

As Yang Xu stared at the results on the screen, he couldn't believe what he was seeing.

Soon after, he calmed down and spoke.

“You’re correct.

“This kind of carbon mixture is much more effective than the porous silicon-based material we developed earlier, especially for the case of oxygen molecule screening.

“But the problem is that we can’t guarantee that the gas entering the chamber is fully oxygen—”

Before he could finish, Lu Zhou interrupted him, “Why do we have to guarantee that the gas chamber has to be 100% oxygen?”

Lu Zhou smiled at Yang Xu. He suddenly took out a small test tube from his pocket and spoke.

“I made this stuff when I was still in Princeton.

“It’s been so many years, but I can finally put it to use.”

Chapter 963 Oxygen Transporter

The most difficult part of the lithium-sulfur battery technology was the shuttle effect.

The shuttle effect occurred during the battery charging and discharging process, where the polysulfide (Li_2S_x) intermediate produced by the positive electrode dissolved into the electrolyte before diffusing through the separator to the negative electrode, and finally contacting the metal lithium.

Lu Zhou was able to achieve lithium-sulfur battery technology, inventing the technology, and registering the patents before ExxonMobil could. He had a huge disagreement with Professor Stanley over lithium-sulfur battery technology.

Professor Stanley, who was backed by ExxonMobil, used subterfuge to poach an assistant from the Sarrot Institute, stealing Professor Sarrot’s caged carbon molecules model.

But there was an up-side to all this.

Professor Stanley eventually somehow helped Lu Zhou complete the “Analyze carbon nanospheres under the modified PDMS film” mission, thus helping him reach level 4 materials science. This indirectly led him to winning the Nobel Prize...

Many years had passed, but Lu Zhou had yet to thank this professor.

The black powder in the test tube was Professor Stanley’s caged carbon molecules, which was the same as the carbon nanospheres found on Debris No.1.

Yang Xu: “What is this...”

“A type of caged carbon molecules used to transport oxygen molecules, although I prefer to call it carbon nanospheres.”

Lu Zhou placed the test tube in Yang Xu’s hands and said, “Don’t forget that in addition to the gas exchange chamber and the external diaphragm, our lithium anode material also has a layer of modified PDMS film on top of it. When the concentration of oxygen molecules on both sides of the film reaches a certain value, they’ll transport oxygen molecules from one side to the other like little ants.”

Basically, it added two layers of security to the oxygen and nitrogen separation system. The first layer was the oxygen screening membrane, which was a mixture of the organic substances listed on the whiteboard by Lu Zhou. This membrane could sustain a 98% pure oxygen environment!

As for the second layer of security, that was the modified PDMS film on the lithium anode material!

After adding the hollow carbon spheres, the modified PDMS film on the surface of the lithium anode would transport oxygen molecules to the lithium anode surface.

“... We can even control the rate of lithium oxidation by modifying the number of carbon nanospheres on the PDMS film, indirectly controlling the performance of the battery.”

When Yang Xu heard Lu Zhou’s words, he was filled with shock.

This thing is that strong?

Even though he wanted to ask Lu Zhou, he was a researcher who had a sample right in front of him. Asking a question would be rather moronic.

Without hesitating, he brought the test tube to an experimental device.

Inside the device was a battery mold and protective gas operation box, which were used to assemble and test batteries.

Testing Lu Zhou's invention was easy; he didn't even need to use a complete lithium-air battery.

He only needed to make a lithium metal sheet covered with modified PDMS material and mixed with the carbon nanospheres. Then, he would have to expose it to a series of gas environments such as pure oxygen, pure carbon dioxide, pure nitrogen, etc. He would instantly know what kind of oxygen pass-through properties it had.

After some complicated preparation and waiting, the experiment was finally done.

In a normal air environment, the reaction wasn't obvious. There was some amount of oxidation on the surface, which was confirmed to be lithium oxide!

In the nitrogen and carbon dioxide environments, the lithium didn't react at all!

As for the pure oxygen environment...

Like Lu Zhou said, the entire lithium anode went through huge changes.

Yang Xu was so surprised he didn't know what to say. Lu Zhou smiled and said, "If you observed these reactions under a microscope, you would be even more shocked."

Yang Xu gulped and said, "So... you completed this experiment... a long time ago?"

Lu Zhou: "I told you, I did this experiment when I was still teaching at Princeton, I just never published it."

Of course, there were still many differences between this carbon nanosphere and the original ones made by Professor Stanley.

By using computational chemistry methods, Lu Zhou adjusted the positions of several large π bonds on the surface, thus increasing its oxygen transportation properties.

However, the methods for preparing the carbon nanospheres stayed the same.

“This is amazing...”

“This oxygen polymer material transporter is incredible!”

Lu Zhou looked at Yang Xu and said nostalgically, “It is incredible. Actually, I’ve always wondered about the mechanism of this transportation process. I even created two sets of theories, but I just can’t prove which one is correct.”

Yang Xu: “How... did you do it?”

Lu Zhou laughed awkwardly and smiled.

“Long story short, an old friend helped me with the caged carbon molecules synthesis, then I found some small improvements on the π bonds.”

Of course, the most important part was having the Debris No.1.

Without the Debris, it would have taken him years to find a hollow carbon sphere that was compatible with oxygen molecules.

Yang Xu: “No problems with the patent?”

Lu Zhou immediately said, “No problems, my friend sold it to me for a very cheap price.”

This happened a long time ago.

Not long after the lithium-sulfur batteries came out, ExxonMobil’s patents became worthless. Even Professor Stanley himself didn’t know that his invention could be applied to lithium-air batteries. Thus, Star Sky Technology was able to buy the patent from him for a very cheap price.

Of course, back then, the patent was under his name, not Star Sky Technology.

Even though it didn't cost a lot to buy the patent, the process was quite cumbersome.

Yang Xu said emotionally, "Your friend is such a nice person."

Lu Zhou smiled heartily.

"Yeah, I agree, he's very nice."

...

Now that the problem with filtering oxygen molecules using the membrane was solved, coupled with the carbon nanospheres, there was no doubt that lithium-air batteries would soon come to life.

After giving Chen Yushan a call and telling her to handle the upcoming patents, Lu Zhou left the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

He came to the institute during the early mornings, and it was already night time when he left.

Using the quantum computer to run a simulation was easy, as he just had to put the model into the computer. Experimenting with the carbon nanospheres took quite a long time, especially since he had to cover the lithium metal with a sheet of modified PDMS film.

Lu Zhou sat in Wang Peng's car. He hadn't slept for more than 30 hours, and he was about to take a short nap when Director Li suddenly called him.

Before Lu Zhou could say hello, the other side spoke aggressively.

"I read your report! Is it true? The carbon-based—" Director Li suddenly realized it wasn't safe to speak about these things over the phone, so he said, "Wait, I'll come to your house."

Lu Zhou yawned and asked, "Where are you now?"

"I'm in Beijing! I'm flying over!"

Lu Zhou: "...?"

Before he could respond, Director Li had ended the call.

Chapter 964 One More Thing

Director Li wasn't kidding with him.

This old man came to his house the next morning.

Lu Zhou stood at his doorstep and saw Director Li holding a plastic bag in his hand. He paused for a second before asking, "You didn't bring me breakfast all the way from Beijing, right?"

"Of course not, I'm not flying with this. It's still hot! I saw a street food place near the neighborhood, so I bought some..." Director Li walked into the house and put on a pair of slippers. He then looked at the fireplace in the living room and said, "Oh, new furniture?"

Lu Zhou: "You came here to talk about my furniture?"

"Of course not." Director Li smiled. He then put on a serious expression and said, "I read the report on the carbon-based chip. The team led by Professor Wu Tianqun successfully created a hundred-thousand-carbon-nanotube transistor chip... Is that true?"

"When have I ever joked about this stuff?" Lu Zhou smiled and looked at the takeaway bag. "I'm pretty hungry, let's eat while we talk."

"Oh, sure, let's eat!"

Director Li knew that Lu Zhou hadn't eaten yet, so he bought two servings of soup dumplings and an extra bowl of noodles.

A bowl of soup dumplings, a cup of soy milk, and a bowl of noodles. For most average adults, that was quite a lot of food.

Director Li watched Lu Zhou almost finish eating his bowl of noodles and dumplings. He then asked with his eyes widened, "Why are you eating so much?"

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and said, "I've been overworking myself recently. I don't normally eat this much."

Director Li said, "Should I call my driver and ask him to get more food?"

“No, thanks.” Lu Zhou wiped his mouth with a tissue and said, “I only need to be half full, let’s talk business.”

Director Li looked at the two empty bowls and thought.

Only half full...

Sigh, it must be good to be young.

They were planning on eating while talking, but Lu Zhou ate too fast, so now, Director Li was the only one eating while Lu Zhou was the one talking.

After hearing some questions from Director Li, Lu Zhou immediately realized how serious the Communist Party of China viewed this “scientific breakthrough”.

It seemed like this was on their top priority list.

Lu Zhou went into his study room and brought back a scientific calculator.

As Director Li looked at the ordinary calculator that was used by high school students across the country, he didn’t know what Lu Zhou wanted to do.

Lu Zhou saw the confusion in Director Li’s eyes, so he began explaining.

“The processor in this is a carbon-based chip.”

Director Li’s face changed, and he looked at the calculator in shock.

It was almost like the calculator had turned into gold.

Or something even more valuable than gold...

Lu Zhou looked at Director Li and spoke.

“The chip is here, but the technology is not mature yet, so we used an experimental chip... It’s called the X-1 chip, with around 150nm in processor size. There are only a couple hundred thousand carbon nano transistors in it. It’s very hard to take this to market. The only up-side is that the carbon-based semiconductor can be prepared by the same chemical process as the SG-1 superconducting material, which is the ‘chemical vapor deposition + etching’ method. We are the world leaders in this method.”

Lu Zhou paused for a second before adding, "To my knowledge, most of the world's SG-1 superconducting material is exported by China."

Director Li gestured with his hand and spoke with excitement.

"Don't worry about taking it to market! As long as you can make the product, we'll take it to market!"

No market demand?

Maybe?

But China could artificially create demand!

Since this thing had a chance to overtake the semiconductor field, Director Li was going to write a report to the relevant state departments. He would arrange for the carbon-based chip scientific calculators to be mandatory in all high schools.

There was no way there wouldn't be enough demand for this technology in the trillion-dollar tech industry.

After all, this was Academician Lu's invention!

As Director Li carefully held the calculator in his hand, he looked at it like it was a precious piece of antique. After a while, he took a deep breath and looked at Lu Zhou.

"Can I have this?"

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Sure, I have more. But I advise you to be careful, and make sure others don't get their hands on it."

Director Li carefully put away the calculator. He had a serious look on his face as he exclaimed, "Don't worry, I'll protect it with my life!"

That's not necessary, it's just a calculator...

It doesn't matter too much since it's almost impossible to reverse engineer.

Seeing how excited Director Li was, Lu Zhou didn't know what to say.

Lu Zhou: “Right now, our research team is working on 75nm transistors, and we’ve made good progress. If we can achieve more than 30 million transistors per square millimeter and decrease the transistor size to 15nm, carbon-based chips will be superior to silicon-based chips. Achieving the same amount of performance in silicon-based chips would take more than 100 million transistors per square millimeter...”

After hearing Lu Zhou’s explanation, Director Li nodded and spoke seriously.

“Actually, after we received your report, we had a meeting in Beijing. We invited some academicians from the Institute of Semiconductors at the Chinese Academy of Sciences to evaluate your report. We understood the theoretical side of your report, but we weren’t sure how close you guys were from making a real carbon-based chip. Even the academicians couldn’t make a conclusion.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “What about now?”

“After seeing this thing in my hand, I understand now.”

Director Li tapped on the calculator and continued in a solemn tone, “Actually, there’s another reason why I came to Jinling...”

965 Dragon One

Before coming to Jinling, Director Li actually didn’t have high hopes for the carbon-based processor from the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

After all, the Institute of Semiconductors of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and countless industry companies were also working on carbon chips research.

After reading Professor Lu’s report, the academicians from the Chinese Academy of Sciences expressed that they thought there might be a breakthrough in the integration of carbon-based transistors on integrated circuits. They didn’t expect them to have actually made a working processor.

While the world was still trying to figure out how to integrate carbon-based transistors into circuits, the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study already made a working carbon-based processor calculator...

Director Li wouldn't have believed it if he didn't see it with his own eyes.

But now, there was no doubt in his mind.

He had a serious look on his face as he spoke.

"Right now, the international situation seems to be calm on the surface, but ever since the establishment of our lunar research station, other countries have made unfriendly moves. You know about the Biosphere A incident last year, right?"

Lu Zhou nodded, expressing his understanding.

Director Li: "That was the tip of the iceberg."

Lu Zhou: "Then what's under the tip of the iceberg?"

Director Li: "According to reliable sources, the United States is scheming to be our competitor in the semiconductor industry."

Lu Zhou paused for a second before asking with a strange look on his face, "Do they not want a nuclear core for the California controllable fusion power plant?"

If this were a few years ago, the United States might have easily been able to beat China in the field of computer technology.

However, the year was 2022, and controllable fusion energy had been around for three years...

"Controllable fusion is our trump card, it's our pair of hidden aces. The only reason we're at the position we're at today is because we have this card."

Director Li unscrewed his vacuum flask and filled it with tea. He took a sip and said, "However, the Americans have other means beside executive orders. For example, they can manipulate the market behavior by increasing the upstream cost of the semiconductor industry chain. That will increase our costs and weaken our industry."

"Therefore, we have to act preemptively!"

"I kind of understand." Lu Zhou nodded and said, "So... what you're saying is?"

“Things like this are supposed to be decided by the market, but sometimes, we can’t just leave the market by itself.” Director Li put on a serious face and placed a document on the table.

“Look at it yourself, please.”

Lu Zhou was a little suspicious at the word “please”.

It was rare for the old man to be so polite to him.

Unless there was something the old man wanted from him.

Lu Zhou looked at the document and felt a headache.

Just yesterday, he made up his mind about devoting himself to Riemann’s hypothesis, but now, there was trouble at his doorstep again.

However, Lu Zhou saw how sincere the old man was, so he sighed and picked up the document.

When he read the title, his eyebrows furrowed.

“Dragon One?”

“Yes.” Director Li nodded and said, “Please read the document first!”

Lu Zhou leaned back on his chair and began reading.

He rarely touched on anything outside of research since that was usually handled by Chen Yushan. However, the content of the document wasn’t complicated, so even he could understand.

Basically, this was a “tripartite agreement”, led by the State Administration for National Defense.

The three parties were Huawei, Star Sky Technology, and the Institute of Semiconductors of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The specific project was regarding Huawei HiSilicon’s latest development plan—the Dragon One series of processors.

Unlike Kirin and their other processors series, the Dragon One series of chips would use the latest carbon-based semiconductor technology. The goal was to overtake the semiconductor field and achieve autonomy in the entire

production chain. This way, China would no longer be dependent on international processor giants and create their own carbon-based processor industry chain.

The document stipulated the respective research and development responsibilities of each organization, as well as the patent ownership and respective fund allocations.

The Institute of Semiconductors and Star Sky Technology were the two elephants of the industry, carrying Huawei on their backs. Together, they planned on creating the Dragon One carbon-based processors as soon as possible.

Huawei obviously benefited from working with two top research institutes. As for the Chinese Academy of Sciences, they were a public organization, so they were not concerned with profits.

As for Star Sky Technology, their benefits were listed in the document. This included profit sharing of the Dragon One series of chips, as well as some one-time scientific research payments.

“Interesting proposal.” Lu Zhou placed the document on the table and contemplated for a second before saying, “I’ll take this to my CEO... I’ll give you a reply in a week?”

“No problem! Take as long as you want, if there’s anything you want to change, feel free to tell me. We’ll try to make adjustments. Or we can all grab dinner and discuss it together.”

“Well, there’s not much to discuss. I’m just a scholar, I’d rather be in a laboratory than a restaurant.” Lu Zhou smiled and said, “But since this involves business cooperation, I have to consult my CEO.”

After all, this wasn’t just a couple of million yuan, this was a billion-dollar project that would impact the entire industry.

Making expedient decisions was not a good idea.

“Take your time then.” Director Li put away the scientific calculator and stood up with a smile. He then said, “That’s all I have for today, I’ll let you rest.”

“You’re going?” Lu Zhou said. He thought Director Li would at least stay for lunch, so he couldn’t help but ask, “Back to Beijing already?”

“Not yet, I still have to go to Hubei first.” Director Li smiled and said, “You just gave us a huge surprise. All of the state departments involved in the semiconductor industry are going to get really busy. I have a lot of work to do, so I can’t stay for any longer.”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Take it easy then.”

Director Li began to walk out of the house. When he saw the stack of papers on the coffee table, he said, “Actually, I’m quite curious, what have you been researching lately?”

“Oh...” Lu Zhou looked at the stack of papers on the coffee table and said, “Just some design plans on lithium-air batteries, nothing huge.”

“Oh, lithium-air batteries, okay then...”

Director Li was almost out of the door when he suddenly stopped.

A second later, he turned back.

“Wait a second? What did you say?”

Lu Zhou was a little shocked.

“Yeah, lithium-air batteries, why?”

Why?!!

Director Li: “???”

Chapter 966 3D Chess

An hour went by.

When Director Li walked out of the mansion, he was a little fazed.

He got in his car and sat in the back seat. While looking at the lush green trees on the sidewalk, he said, "I'm getting old."

The driver in front of him paused for a second and spoke.

"Oh no, you're not, you're only in your early sixties, you still have decades ahead of you."

Director Li smiled and sighed.

"No, I'm not young anymore. I can't even hold a conversation with you young folks anymore. I have maybe five more years before my old heart gives out."

The driver kept on driving and didn't respond.

The driver felt like Director Li had some misunderstandings regarding young people.

He wanted to ask what this was about, but he remembered that Director Li had just come out of Professor Lu's house, meaning the Director probably talked about sensitive topics. Thus, the driver decided to keep his mouth shut.

Director Li took out his phone and called Director Lu from the energy bureau.

"Hey? Old Lu, let me tell you something, this trip to Jinling was worth it!"

"..."

...

In fact, it was quite difficult for lithium-air batteries to completely replace lithium-sulfur batteries. After all, keeping a constant pressure for the oxygen molecule filtering membrane would require the battery to be in constant motion.

Therefore, automobiles were undoubtedly an excellent application. The front grill could be used to supply oxygen to the lithium-air battery.

However, if someone wanted to place a lithium-air battery in their cell phone, it would be quite difficult to add a "front grill".

Lithium-sulfur batteries were more focused on the materials, whereas lithium-air batteries were more focused on its mechanism, such as using clever design to maximize its energy density.

This meant that, the larger the battery, the more space designers could use to place components and increase the energy density.

An extreme example would be the IBM “Battery-500” project, where they wanted to use distributed computing technology to ensure that each oxygen molecule entering the reaction system was accurately matched into a lithium slot...

Of course, achieving this kind of technology was almost impossible. At least in the near future.

After Director Li finally left, Lu Zhou put away the draft papers on his coffee table.

These were all ideas that came to his mind when he was researching the structure of Debris No. 1, so they were far from being mature designs.

However, even though they were just spur-of-the-moment designs, with his level 6 engineering and his experience in large engineering scientific research projects, the designs were quite sophisticated.

After finding out that the lithium-air battery wasn't a mature technology, Director Li finally gave up.

However, before leaving, he expressed that when the technology became mature, the State Administration for National Defense could help with the patent approval process.

Normally, patent approval procedures could take years, but Director Li could complete it in a matter of weeks.

Star Sky Technology had always had this kind of patent privilege.

Lu Zhou took out his phone and called Chen Yushan.

Soon after, a familiar voice traveled through the phone.

“Hello? Calling me again? Aren't you on a retreat?”

"I wish I was..." Lu Zhou sighed and cleared his throat. "Director Li came to see me."

Chen Yushan said, "What did he want this time?"

"It's about the Dragon One chip."

Lu Zhou spent around five minutes talking about the tri-party agreement and the Dragon One processor plans.

He also talked about some parts of the contract that he was unsure about.

After hearing Lu Zhou's words, Chen Yushan leaned back on her chair and contemplated for a second before saying, "It's quite a good contract, and the patent is only regarding the chip itself?"

Lu Zhou: "Kind of, I can send a copy to your email."

"Okay, it's better to email me the contract first." Chen Yushan paused for a second and said, "Also, we should specify that the carbon transistor chip integration technology is independent. After all, we were the ones that invented this technology, so we can't just let them take advantage of us."

Lu Zhou smiled and said, "Sure, whatever you think is best. I also talked with Director Li about the lithium-air battery breakthrough, so let's try to register the patent as soon as possible."

The other end of the phone went silent.

Lu Zhou didn't know why Chen Yushan was being so quiet.

After a while, Lu Zhou asked, "What's wrong?"

She finally responded, "Lithium-air battery breakthrough?"

"Yeah," Lu Zhou nodded and said, "have I not told you about this?"

Chen Yushan: "When did you tell me?"

Lu Zhou finally realized that he only brought the model to Yang Xu yesterday, so he didn't have a chance to tell her yet.

Lu Zhou smiled awkwardly and said, "Oh right, my fault."

“No, it’s fine, I’m just surprised... Let me think, if we can play this card well, it might be very effective...”

Chen Yushan began to contemplate.

Lu Zhou was wondering if he should hang up the phone and give her time to think, but she suddenly said, “Oh yeah, didn’t you tell me that lithium-air batteries can be used in cars?”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “Not just cars, but it’s definitely the most suitable application. The larger the battery is, the higher its energy density. Also, because of the nature of the oxygen molecular membrane, it’s better to be used in moving vehicles.”

It was almost like Chen Yushan just hit the lottery as she said excitedly, “Got it! I’ll handle this! Oh yeah, publish some papers about the lithium-air battery. You don’t have to make it too detailed, just tell the world that we’ve made research progress on lithium-air batteries.”

What do you mean just publish some papers...

Writing papers isn’t easy at all. I can’t just write some substandard paper; I’m a Nobel Prize level scholar, my reputation is on the line.

Lu Zhou sighed after hearing Chen Yushan’s words. “What do you plan on doing then?”

Chen Yushan smirked and sat up straight as she said with a confident tone, “I plan on playing 4D chess!”

Lu Zhou: “...?”

Chapter 967 Just Write I

Play 4D chess...

Can’t she speak normally?

It was getting late, and the sun was coming down.

Lu Zhou sat in front of his desk as he stared at his computer screen with a headache. He stared at the blinking text cursor and suddenly shook his head.

He had to publish a thesis that wouldn't disclose any "industry secrets", or even any specific academic information. However, that thesis had to show the world that the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had made a major breakthrough in lithium-air batteries...

Also, he had to make his paper as impactful as possible...

How the f*ck am I supposed to "just write this"?

Lu Zhou had been in academia for many years, but this was the first time he faced a situation like this.

He scratched his head and wanted to give up. Suddenly, the test tube on the corner of his desk caught his eye.

Inspiration flowed through his brain like a tsunami.

He stood up from his chair and exclaimed, "I got it!"

Since he couldn't write about specific lithium-air battery technical details, it was better to focus on the mathematical model. He could simply publish a computational materials science paper and avoid talking about the lithium-air battery.

His eyes began to lit up, and his hands began to move across the keyboard. He typed a title line on the previously blank document.

[Research on the transportation of oxygen molecules in caged carbon molecules and modified PDMS materials, and its application prospects in the field of lithium-air batteries]

When Lu Zhou read the title, he couldn't help but praise himself, "I'm a genius!"

The patent application for the caged carbon molecules had already been completed. Even though he adjusted several large π bonds on the caged carbon molecules, he still had the patent rights.

He already completed the experiment and had all of the data, so even one of his students could easily write this thesis.

Lu Zhou spent a couple of hours writing and formatting the paper.

After he converted it to PDF format, he attached the file into an email and looked at his email list. He clicked with his mouse and thought about where to submit this paper.

Nature?

Science?

Neither of them sounds good.

This kind of boring result is going to take a long time to get published. The most important thing is to make this as impactful and sensational as possible.

Lu Zhou made up his mind.

Since it's such a bad paper, I'm not going to submit it to Nature.

After some consideration, Lu Zhou sent the email to the JACS editorial department.

Even though JACS wasn't as famous as Nature and Science, it still had a high impact factor in the materials science and chemistry fields. It was one of the top journals in its respective field.

The paper Lu Zhou wrote on the "Theoretical Model of Electrochemical Interface Structure", which won him the Nobel Prize, was submitted to JACS.

Because he reviewed some papers for the journal, he had a good relationship with the editorial department. Thus, his paper wouldn't take long to get approved.

After all of that, Lu Zhou stretched his back and went to bed.

...

The other side of the world, America.

Someone in the editorial department of JACS exclaimed, "Jesus, Kanov, guess what I just received in my mailbox? Professor Lu's paper!"

Kanov looked at Agris, the editor-in-chief, and was shocked.

“Wait a second, what did you say? Professor Lu’s paper? He’s back to materials science?”

Agris smiled and said, “What do you mean back, he never left materials science. Have you forgotten who the founder of the theoretical model of computational materials and electrochemical interfaces is? Who the 2018 Nobel Prize winner was!”

The JACS journal had published many Nobel Prize level papers; however, Agris personally reviewed and approved the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry paper!

That achievement alone was enough for him to brag for the rest of his life.

Kanov quietly muttered, “But he doesn’t seem to think so.”

“That doesn’t matter! What matters is what we think! Forget about this, let me have a look first,” Agris said as he printed out the paper and began to read.

Kanov saw that Agris had a weird look on his face. He hesitated for a moment before asking the editor-in-chief, “What’s in the paper?”

“Oxygen molecule transportation using caged carbon molecules in modified PDMS material... Jesus, it’s about lithium-air batteries!” Agris took a deep breath and turned the page as he said, “I’ve heard rumors that the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study is researching lithium-air batteries and that their project leader is Yang Xu!”

Kanov knew of Yang Xu. He had an emotional look on his face.

“The author of this paper is Lu Zhou...”

“Yeah.” Agris gulped and pinched the manuscript with his hand as he said, “Kanov, do you know what this means? This means they might have been successful!”

Kanov didn’t know why Agris kept answering his own questions.

However, he realized why his editor-in-chief was making such a big deal out of this.

Based on his past experience, when it came to popular academic research projects, after the research team made a breakthrough, they often restrained from immediately publishing their results.

Even if they did publish, it was because they were forced to “present their results”. Often times, they would publish trivial research that couldn’t inspire their competitors.

Yang Xu, for example, hadn’t published a single paper in the past year. However, everyone knew that his research team was making good progress.

Now that Lu Zhou suddenly published this paper...

Not to mention that the paper was about a huge breakthrough.

There was only one possibility, which was that the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study had already obtained a patent for this technology, and might have even matured the technology!

This was the only explanation as to why they were willing to publish such a revealing thesis.

There was no question regarding if this paper would get published.

The problem was finding the right reviewer.

Agris looked at Kanov and asked, “Who else is in this research area?”

Kanov thought for a second and said, “Professor Jeff Dahn from Dalhousie University in Canada. He’s a pioneer in the industrial application of LiNixMnyCozO₂ and did good research on lithium batteries. He has published countless Science papers... I think he’s a good choice.”

Agris contemplated for a second and said, “It might be difficult. He’s working on an IBM project, so he might not have the free time. We have to find an expert, but not a competitor.”

“That’s going to be difficult.”

Kanov scratched his head, and a name suddenly appeared in his mind. His eyes lit up as he said, “I know someone! He’s the perfect choice!”

Agris asked, “Who?”

“Professor Stanley Whittingham from Binghamton University! He’s published this paper on titanium sulfide cathodes. I think he’s no longer doing experiments, but I still remember how shocked I was when I first read his paper...”

Agris began to look impatient, so Kanov quickly added, “I noticed that Professor Lu referenced a result from Professor Stanley’s caged carbon molecules.

“He’s the perfect reviewer for this thesis!”

Chapter 968 Approve It!

Even though Kanov’s ideas were hard to execute, there was no one on Earth better than Professor Stanley to review this thesis.

After all, in a way, this was like letting the author review his own thesis...

Binghamton University.

Inside a chemistry laboratory.

Professor Stanley had just returned from giving a lecture. He threw his notebook on the sofa and whistled to himself as he sat down at his desk.

After his failure a few years ago, ExxonMobil lost the opportunity to enter the lithium-sulfur battery market and also lost their trust in him.

This was a huge blow to his self-esteem, which caused his depression for quite some time.

However, after some time, he gradually came out of that man’s shadow.

He didn’t react at all when he watched Lu Zhou on television, presenting one result after another.

It wasn’t like he was the only person who was defeated by Lu Zhou...

Materials science was a field that had an element of luck involved. Some people might never achieve their desired experiment results, while others succeeded by happenstance.

Even the 2008 Nobel Prize laureate in chemistry, Martin Chalfie, said, “Sometimes if an experiment is unsuccessful, try throwing the sample on the ground or in the sea, do anything you can think of. Eventually, someone will work.”

Professor Lu was obviously favored by gods, so Professor Stanley wanted to stay as far away from him as possible.

Professor Stanley was about to call his assistant to make him another cup of coffee when his assistant suddenly spoke.

“Professor, you have a review invitation from JACS.”

Review invitation from JACS?

Interesting.

Professor Stanley said casually, “Print out the paper, let me check it out.”

“Okay, professor!”

Professor Stanley suddenly remembered that he forgot to ask for another cup of coffee.

Sigh, I’m getting old, my memory is deteriorating.

Whatever, I’ll make it myself.

Professor Stanley sighed and shook his head. He stood up and went to the coffee machine.

When he sat back down at his desk, his student brought over the freshly printed paper.

Professor Stanley drank his coffee as he read the paper title. He couldn’t help but sneer.

Lithium-air battery?

Which idiot is it this time?

However, when he looked at the author’s name, his eyebrows began to twitch.

Lu Zhou!

“Not this again...”

Professor Stanley took another sip of coffee and pretended like he didn't read the author's name. He began to read the abstract.

However, he couldn't concentrate.

He was halfway through reading the first line of the abstract when he suddenly spat out the coffee from his mouth.

“This despicable thief! Liar! Shameless!”

Professor Stanley ignored the coffee spills on his clothes and stood up.

Everyone in the office was stunned, and they tried not to make eye contact with the grumpy professor.

As Professor Stanley stared at the paper in his hands, his eyes were filled with rage. He wanted to tear the paper to shreds.

Caged carbon molecules!

That was mine!

He would never forget what happened six years ago, where his academic career was demolished by these damn carbon nanospheres!

“When the oxygen purity of one side of the modified PDMS film reaches 96.7%, the carbon nanospheres embedded in the modified PDMS film act as transporters, moving the remaining oxygen molecules...”

“This is quite a peculiar phenomenon. The oxygen concentration decreases nonlinearly as the thickness of the modified PDMS material decreases. I think there are two possibilities for this phenomenon... F*ck sake, this little sh*t...”

Professor Stanley's face was as red as a tomato. It was like something was stuck in his throat, stopping him from breathing.

His assistant immediately stepped forward and gave him a glass of water.

He drank the glass of water and was finally able to breathe.

“Thanks...”

He sat back down and squeezed the paper in his hand. His eyes were filled with regret.

I was finessed.

I’m not the only one.

ExxonMobil is also about to be played.

Even though he was finessed by this as*hole six years ago, he didn’t expect this “double agent” to play him again six years later...

“Damn it, I should have known...”

Professor Stanley grabbed his hair and looked broken.

Why didn’t I try to add the caged carbon molecules to a polymer material, and try to find out its oxygen environment characteristics?

I’ve done similar experiments before, I’m a master in materials science!

However, reality was often disappointing.

No one would have expected that the modified PDMS film could be used in lithium-air batteries...

Despite Stanley calling Lu Zhou a “thief”, he decided to ignore the fact that the model for the material was “stolen” from the Sarrot laboratory...

The students in the office looked at each other; they didn’t dare to speak.

Six years ago, most of them were still in their undergraduate studies; some were even in high school...

The assistant looked at his boss and spoke.

“Then... are we rejecting?”

“No...” Professor Stanley scrunched the paper into a ball and threw it in the waste bin. “Approve it!”

Assistant: "...?"

Students: "???"

Approved?!

Look at how furious you are, why are you approving?

The assistant looked at his angry boss, unsure if the professor was kidding or not. The assistant then sat down at his desk and began writing a response to JACS.

Normally, the paper review process took longer, but seeing how the reviewer already finished reading the paper...

The assistant would just respond with some generic review comments.

Professor Stanley looked at his assistant and started to calm down. He quietly muttered to himself, "A research result like this... Even if the Nobel Committee isn't interested in materials science, the American Materials Research Society award committee will take this seriously."

Even though the property of the caged carbon molecules in the modified PDMS film wasn't discovered by him, if it could really be used for lithium-air batteries...

It would benefit Stanley in some way.

But I'm still so f*cking angry!

I can't accept this.

After taking a dozen breaths trying to calm down, Professor Stanley made a decision.

Since this shameful dog is going to use my research as a reference, I'll give him a taste of his own medicine...

Chapter 969 Decision

Shanghai suburbs.

In a twenty-story office building conference room packed with cardboard boxes, a Caucasian man with a large nose sat at the conference table, across from Li Tinghui. They seemed to be quietly waiting for something.

The clock on the wall hit the hour mark, making a click sound.

It was almost like this sound interrupted Li Tinghui's train of thought, startling him.

He took a deep breath and placed the contract on the table.

"Apologies, but I can't accept your proposal."

This was an acquisition contract, not for Beep Beep Charging, but for himself.

Bobby's offer was quite attractive.

He did his best to sell 60% of his shares to Star Sky Technology for 10 million yuan, but now Tesla was willing to buy the remaining 40% for 10 million.

And if he agreed, this 10 million yuan would go into his own pocket.

Of course, this meant that he was completely out of the game and would lose total control of Beep Beep Charging. The promising charging station startup he founded would turn into a pissing contest between Star Sky Technology and Tesla.

"It's okay, I expected this," the Caucasian man said. He stood up and smiled casually as he said, "I hope you think this through seriously, after all..."

He paused for a second and continued, "You're facing a giant with tens of billions of dollars of assets, even if you're back by Star Sky Technology, you're not a competitor."

Bobby smirked with a disdainful smile.

Elon personally told him to talk with the founder of Beep Beep Charging and try to acquire the remaining 40%.

However, Bobby didn't take Elon's words seriously.

Tesla was the leader in electric vehicles; its brand name was implanted deeply in the alternative energy vehicle industry. It was like the Apple of cars, with an army of loyal supporters.

Now that Tesla had acquired EVgo and mastered its “ultra-fast high power charging station” technology, the first batch of charging stations had gone into production at the Shanghai factory, and they would be deployed at the end of next month.

Wireless charging?

It was a creative idea, but this gimmick stood no chance against the all-mighty Tesla.

By the time they took their product to market, Tesla would have already dominated the Shanghai charging station field.

After they left, the Chief Technology Officer, Wang Qiang, walked next to Li Tinghui and looked at the Tesla Roadster driving off on the streets below.

“CEO Li, those guys were from Tesla?”

Wang Qiang wasn't the only one curious.

The employees in the office also secretly looked over, hoping to hear something interesting.

Faced with his subordinates questioning his decision making, Li Tinghui nodded and said, “Yeah, Tesla's China General Manager, Bobby.”

There was a quiet exclaim in the office.

Wang Qiang couldn't help but said, “Our company is becoming more and more nutty. First, we're financed by Star Sky Technology, and now, Tesla wants to invest... Did they talk about the term sheet?”

Li Tinghui was emotionless as he nodded and said, “Kind of...”

He obviously wasn't going to tell them that Bobby wanted to buy him out.

That would defeat morale.

“Then CEO Li, did you agree?”

Li Tinghui looked at his partner's face. He didn't know why, but he suddenly remembered Bobby's face.

Bobby looked at him as if he were an ant.

Li Tinghui felt a burning sensation in his chest. He looked at his co-workers and suddenly spoke.

"No."

The office went quiet.

Chief Technology Officer Wang Qiang had his mouth wide open.

No?!

This is Tesla!

The electric vehicles giant!

He didn't know why his CEO would refuse the offer, refuse to receive help from Tesla.

Li Tinghui looked at the surprised employees and knew what they were speaking. He spoke calmly.

"Tesla didn't come to us with an offer, they came with a gun.

"Some of you might know this already, but listen carefully, Tesla has acquired EVgo and wants to penetrate the Chinese charging station market. Tesla is our competitor. Tesla is not our friend. Receiving financing from them means capitulating to them!

"Our goal is to become the largest charging station company in China, or even in the world! Not just some subsidiary of Tesla!

"We won't bow down to those Americans!

"You want their help? Keep on dreaming! The second they acquire us, they're going to break us down and pave the way for EVgo to control the Yangtze River Delta city group area. They're going to sell our own energy back to our citizens!"

Li Tinghui didn't care if his employees understood him.

Those were his true thoughts.

The office was dead silent.

Some people were confused, some people were shocked...

Someone applauded.

Then, like dominos, thunderous applause filled the entire office.

Li Tinghui took a deep breath and nodded.

"Thank you.

"It's an honor to work with you all."

...

Whether it was because of ambition or blind optimism, Li Tinghui wasn't worried at all. In fact, he was more relaxed than he had ever been.

His competitor was EVgo, a subsidiary of Tesla.

It was foreseeable that all Tesla electric vehicles would only be compatible with EVgo chargers.

However, now was not the time to worry about this. There was something else more important.

One was the relocation of his office.

The other was to negotiate with shopping malls, residential areas, and other parking lots in Shanghai regarding obtaining exclusive wireless charging station locations...

Office building, cafeteria.

Li Tinghui was sitting in a secluded corner, listening to the news on TV.

The CTV channel suddenly began to talk about a recent breakthrough in the lithium-air battery, with Professor Lu's new paper in JACS making the news.

Lithium-air battery?

Li Tinghui looked at the TV screen in shock.

That is some high-tech stuff...

Lithium-sulfur battery was just invented, and now it's about to be obsolete?

He ate some rice and chewed while thinking.

Even though he wasn't in the materials science field, as an electrical engineer, he still knew a little bit about materials science.

If there really was a breakthrough in lithium-air batteries, that meant that the driving range of electric vehicles would increase to a whole nether level. This would decrease the desirability of battery swapping.

After all, not only did the user have to pay for electricity, but they also had to pay for external costs such as battery removal and replacement. Only long-distance travelers had the motive to exchange money for their time.

For most civilians running to the grocery store, the lithium-sulfur batteries had plenty of juice. They could easily charge their batteries at night.

This was undoubtedly good news for Beep Beep Charging.

After the lithium-air battery news segment, the news anchor began to talk about iron ore prices continuing to rise. According to trustworthy sources, due to the increase in Asia's infrastructure market, the prices of raw materials had increased.

Li Tinghui wasn't very concerned with the futures market, so he placed his attention back to eating.

He didn't realize what kind of impact the lithium-air batteries would have on the charging station market...

Chapter 970 This Is Horrifying!

Ever since the lithium-sulfur battery breakthrough, various disputes and debates in the battery industry had disappeared. Both the academic community and the industry quietly adopted the new technology.

A bunch of aluminum ion battery projects had been cut off. Instead, companies had redirected their research and development to improve the “modified PDMS materials and HCS-2 materials”. These research projects were focused on increasing the energy density and safety of lithium-sulfur batteries.

The reason for this was because lithium was the king of batteries. It was simply impossible for any other periodic element to have a higher energy density than lithium, due to lithium’s position on the periodic table.

Lithium batteries had always been the apex predator of batteries, while the lithium-air battery was considered the holy grail of lithium batteries.

Trying to surpass it through changing materials alone was impossible. It would have to be something that wasn’t considered a chemical battery. For example, instead of using the electrochemical energy, the battery would instead use some kind of fusion energy...

However, while everyone believed that the lithium-sulfur batteries would dominate the battery industry for at least the next fifty years...

A paper published in JACS in the middle of March broke the silence!

At the parking lot of a kindergarten in Jinling, two parents stood beside their cars smoking. Because they were both car enthusiasts, they started to talk about the news.

“Did you hear the news?”

“What news?”

“The Jinling Institute for Advanced Study invented this lithium-air battery! Apparently, it’s double the capacity of lithium-sulfur batteries.”

The bald parent was stunned. He spoke with his eyes wide open.

“No way?! They’re all made from lithium, can they really double the capacity? I think it’ll add at most a hundred or two hundred kilometers to the range.”

The tall parent pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and spoke.

“Who knows, I’m not an expert. But think about it... it might be possible. I mean, lithium-air batteries use air as the positive electrode, right?”

“... Yeah, why?”

“Think about it, if the air is used as the positive electrode, that means the weight of the battery will be reduced, right? Reducing weight means the energy density will increase! I think this makes sense!”

The bald parent finally understood.

However, he suddenly frowned and slapped his thigh.

“F*ck, why the f*ck did I buy the new Tesla Model-S then!”

The skinny owner was startled.

“Oh sh*t, I didn’t know you were a baller!”

“Not a baller.” The bald owner flicked his cigarette and said, “I missed out huge this time.”

The skinner owner gloated and began comforting his bald friend.

“Haha, it will take a while before the technology is implemented. Just enjoy your car, maybe you’ll be able to swap out the battery. Also, why are you worrying, even these car manufacturers are not worrying. Haha, thank god I didn’t buy a new car, I’ll wait a bit and see what happens!”

Similar speculations on the battery were going on in many places.

The CTV news report was just the beginning.

The minute Professor Lu and his lithium-air battery appeared on the news, numerous reports and articles began popping up.

[Invention of lithium-air battery! The energy industry is going through a revolution?]

[Scientific genius! Another invention was made by Professor Lu?]

[One small battery is going to change the world!]

[The US Dollar is in jeopardy, we must stop China from manipulating the oil prices again!]

[...]

The only thing that could defeat lithium batteries, was lithium batteries.

Lithium-air batteries were no longer “science fiction”.

Oil prices didn’t become volatile due to this event... at least not as volatile as when the lithium-sulfur batteries were invented. However, the ExxonMobil CEO shouted in his office building in Texas.

“F*ck!”

Woods slammed his fist on the table and swept the documents off his desk. His blood was boiling.

“This shameless thief! Liar!”

His chest was shaking violently, so he took a deep breath and tried to calm down. He then glared at his secretary who was sitting at a desk nearby.

“Find the file! I want to know in the next five minutes, which company owns the patent to the caged carbon molecules!”

Lithium-air batteries would mainly impact the lithium-sulfur batteries industry, increasing the market competitiveness of electric vehicles in the long term. However, oil prices wouldn’t be affected in the short term.

However...

This patent was originally theirs!

Now, this patent contained a key material in lithium-air battery technology! It was almost like throwing away rubbish that contained a diamond inside. Woods felt like he couldn’t breathe.

The only thing he hoped was that he still had time to buy back the patent before Star Sky Technology and Lu Zhou could react...

However...

Reality was often cruel.

His secretary's trembling voice made him lose all hope.

"The patent was bought by a foreign trade company registered in California around three years ago..."

Woods cursed in his heart and suddenly had a thought.

However, he didn't want to believe himself.

He didn't want to imagine what would happen if...

Woods clenched his fist and said to his secretary, "Find the patent number! I want to know who owns the patent now."

He swore that once he found out which company owned the patent, he would do everything he could to acquire it and amend his mistake! He knew he could do this, especially with ExxonMobil's resources.

He only needed a shareholder to sell-out and put himself on the board of directors of that company, then make a deal the shareholders couldn't refuse.

It would be perfect if the company was a public company, then he would have more room to maneuver.

"I'm searching..."

The secretary suddenly froze.

The secretary had a bitter expression on his face as he knew his answer would drive his boss crazy.

"The company that owns the patent is..."

"Star Sky Technology."

Star Sky Technology...

Woods relaxed his shoulders and smiled calmly.

He finally understood what was going on.

This started from the experiment six years ago, where the tides changed when the assistant leaked the model to Professor Stanley.

Not only did Professor Lu deliberately leak information, but he also used ExxonMobil's resources and Professor Stanley to research key lithium-air battery technologies. They were even fooled into throwing away crucial patents that didn't apply to lithium-sulfur batteries...

The more he thought about it, the more terrified he was. A bead of sweat dripped down Woods' forehead.

That guy...

Was six years ahead of me.

Is he even human?

His plan... is horrifying...

Chapter 971 I Know Who Did the Work

"Achoo!"

Lu Zhou rubbed his nose and muttered to himself, "Xiao Ai, why am I sneezing all the time, I don't feel like I'm sick."

He had been sneezing more and more frequently these days.

Strange thing was that he didn't show any signs of a cold.

It felt like someone was talking about him behind his back again...

A string of bubbles appeared on the lower right corner of his computer screen.

Xiao Ai: [Master, Master, I know, someone must be talking about how handsome you are.]

Lu Zhou saw the text and awkwardly smiled.

This little thing...

Even though its intelligence hadn't increased after the upgrade, it had gotten better at compliments.

Which was exactly what Lu Zhou liked.

Lu Zhou was about to continue working on his research project when he suddenly received a phone call.

He picked up the phone and spoke.

"Hello?"

"Hello? Academician Lu, it's me, Old Lu, do you still remember me?"

Emm...

Old Lu?

Lu Zhou paused for a second.

Honestly, he didn't remember who that was.

Seeing how Lu Zhou didn't speak, the other end of the phone suddenly felt awkward.

"Um. you didn't... forget about me, right?"

"Of course not..."

Lu Zhou frowned and thought for a while. Suddenly, a name popped up in his head, and his eyes lit up as he said, "Director Lu?"

Director Lu Kaimin from the Energy Bureau!

These two had interacted before on the controllable nuclear fusion project and the lithium-sulfur battery project.

Ever since the controllable nuclear fusion project ended, the Energy Bureau shifted their focus from renewable energy to nuclear fusion energy. Lu Zhou left the nuclear fusion field, so the two had rarely interacted in recent years.

Instead, the State Administration for National Defense took over the renewable energy industry, which resulted in Lu Zhou working more often with them.

Lu Zhou smiled and asked, “Director Lu, why are you calling me, do you need something?”

Director Lu smiled and said, “Oh, nothing, nothing, just wondering, where are you right now?”

Lu Zhou twisted the pen in his hand and said, “I’m in Jinling... at the Jin University mathematics department office, why?”

Director Lu was overjoyed, and he said, “Nothing, just wait there, I’ll be there in the afternoon! The plane is about to take off, talk to you later.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Even though Director Lu told him he was coming, Lu Zhou still didn’t expect him to arrive this fast.

The day after the JACS paper was published, this old director came all the way to Jinling to see his friend.

Jin Ling University, mathematics department building.

The grinning old man walked into the office and spoke charismatically.

“Academician Lu, long time no see, how have you been?”

“Yeah, it’s been a while.” Lu Zhou put down his pen and said, “Did Director Li persuade you to come here?”

“What do you mean persuade? No, nothing to do with him! I just saw your JACS paper, so...” Director Li said. He wasn’t sure how to explain himself, so he said, “Forget about that... Did you guys really make a lithium-air battery?”

Lu Zhou thought for a second before saying, “Some of the technologies have been invented, and the rest is about solving the design problems.”

Once they had finished researching the materials, designing the product was easy. Not to mention that he still had Debris No.1 as a reference model, so he could easily make a copy and achieve similar energy densities.

As Director Lu sat down on the sofa, Lu Zhou looked at Assistant Zhao and spoke.

“Zhao Huan, pour Director Lu a cup of tea.”

“Okay, professor!”

Zhao Huan stood up and walked to the cupboard. She took out a teapot and poured some into a porcelain cup. She then placed the cup on the table and spoke.

“Director Lu, please enjoy.”

“Oh, thank you.”

The old director took a sip and spoke dramatically.

“This is amazing tea!”

Lu Zhou: “Want to take some home?”

Director Lu waved his hand and said, “No thanks, I know where you got this from, we have a ton at home.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Then why did you pretend like it was your first time drinking it!

Honestly speaking, Lu Zhou couldn’t taste the difference between good tea and bad tea. Rarely did he drink tea.

Every holiday, people would give him a bunch of gifts. He would send back some of them, and as for the rest, he would try to give away.

Lu Zhou knew that Director Lu had something to say, so he looked at Assistant Zhao and spoke.

“Zhao Huan, bring this to the teaching affairs department for me.”

“Okay, professor!”

Assistant Zhao took the documents from Lu Zhou’s desk and left.

Lu Zhou looked at He Changwen, the only other person left in the office.

“He Changwen, you should—”

Before Lu Zhou could finish, the PhD student kept his laptop and stood up.

“Okay, professor, I’ll go to the library.”

Lu Zhou smiled with satisfaction.

Quite a smart kid.

Saved me from having to make up an excuse.

Lu Zhou and Director Lu were the only two left in the office.

Seeing how there was no one else in the room, Director Lu relaxed and said, “I was scared to speak in front of your students.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “Well, you can speak now.”

“Remember how Director Li brought back a calculator of yours? Apparently, the second he landed in Beijing, he took the calculator to Chang’an Avenue. There was quite a commotion! I was there in person, and apparently, the old academician that inspected the calculator nearly passed out.”

Lu Zhou was a little worried.

“Is everyone okay?”

“They’re fine.” Director Lu smiled and said, “There was a medical team on standby.”

Director Lu continued to speak emotionally, “Honestly, we didn’t expect you to be this crazy, you already produced a carbon processor. The lithium-air batteries have plagued the energy industry for decades, but now, you solved that as well.”

Lu Zhou shook his head and said, “It wasn’t solved by me alone. Whether it was the carbon processor or the lithium-air battery, it was a team effort.”

Director Lu obviously thought Lu Zhou was being too humble.

The old man waved his hand and said, “Okay, fine, stop humble bragging. I know who did the real work here.”

Lu Zhou looked confused and didn’t respond.

Director Lu took another sip of tea and spoke enthusiastically.

“So, about the lithium-air batteries, I want to know... its energy density.”

Lu Zhou contemplated for a second and gave a conservative answer.

“Energy density... it’s difficult to estimate. But theoretically, it should be at least 1.5 times that of lithium-sulfur batteries.”

Director Lu’s eyes suddenly lit up. He rested his hands on his knees and spoke solemnly.

“I have another question, Academician Lu!”

Seeing how Director Lu was so serious, Lu Zhou put on a serious face as well and spoke.

“Go ahead.”

However...

Director Lu’s question was a bit unexpected.

Or rather, Lu Zhou didn’t expect him to ask the question so directly...

“Can we use lithium-air batteries... on tanks?!”

Chapter 972 Have to Help Us

Using it on tanks...

Faced with Director Lu’s solemn and earnest face, Lu Zhou finally knew why this old man was here.

In fact, research on electrical tanks was nothing novel.

“Dr. Porsche” had done similar research in the 1930s.

The VK4501P tank had a Porsche Type 101/1 air-cooled engine, where the power generated by the engine was stored in a battery, which was used to drive the two 275kW motors.

However, due to the limitation of technology back then, the electric tanks didn't provide a huge advantage on the battlefield. Only the “differential steering system” technology from the tank was retained.

With the continuous advancement of science and technology, the concept of electric tanks had been widely talked about in the military industry.

Lu Zhou speculated that Director Lu wasn't only asking about tanks.

What Director Lu really wanted to know was if the dividends from controllable nuclear fusion could overflow to the military industry...

“You would have to ask a military expert for that.” Lu Zhou thought for a second and said, “But in my opinion, whether it is lithium-sulfur batteries or lithium-air batteries, they all have limited application in the military field.”

Director Lu was a little worried, so he immediately asked, “Why?”

“Safety.” Lu Zhou sighed and said, “Chemical batteries use redox reaction to convert chemical potential energy to electrical energy. Since there's a redox reaction going on, there will be stability issues. Lithium can spontaneously ignite in the air. If hit by something like a shell, it wouldn't just be engine oil leakage, it would one hundred percent result in an internal explosion.”

Surely someone told him about this before.

Like Lu Zhou had expected, Director Lu didn't look surprised.

“Oh, I see.”

Director Lu had a look of sadness on his face.

Obviously, Beijing already held a technical meeting regarding this topic, and judging by his reaction, he was on the supportive side of lithium-air battery application in military fields. However, it seemed like it was already shown to be technically infeasible.

The old man stared at the teacup on the coffee table for a long time. He raised his head and asked reluctantly, "Is there no room for improvement? For example, make a battery that is more stable and still has a high energy density?"

"That's not something that can be done with a chemical battery..."

Lu Zhou shook his head and paused for a second before he spoke again.

"Actually... I don't know a lot about the military. However, from what I understand, even though it is not reliable to use lithium-air batteries for front-line units such as tanks, if you used it on non-combat units such as transport vehicles and trucks, or even logistics helicopters, it might be possible."

An electric engine had the advantage of lower noise and better control.

There were many other advantages of having a fully electric logistics system, especially under the premise of having access to electrical facilities.

Director Lu began to think, while Lu Zhou smiled and spoke, "Actually I'm a liberal, I haven't done a lot of research on weapons. But if the military needs my advice, all I can say is to focus on other places instead of chemical batteries."

Director Lu immediately asked, "Like what?"

Lu Zhou said, "Like controllable fusion technology. I've already made a miniaturized controllable fusion battery. Even though there are many cost restrictions, in a decade or so, the fusion battery might achieve the level of results you desire."

Miniaturization of controllable fusion technology had already been used in spacecraft such as Starlight and Magpie Bridge. Apparently, the newest generation of nuclear submarines was also using fusion batteries.

Lu Zhou remembered seeing a large order from the Chinese Navy regarding fusion batteries.

Wanting to apply this technology to land units would require a reduction in cost and battery size, but who knew what could happen in the future?

As long as they continued down this research path, this technology would continue to improve.

...

No matter how much Lu Zhou talked about fusion batteries, the Director of the Energy Bureau and the electric vehicle industry were still going crazy over the lithium-air batteries.

Several Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers had summoned engineers to study Lu Zhou's paper. They were able to deduce that the lithium-air batteries wouldn't have a huge effect on them; they only had to add a front air intake grill.

In short, the electric vehicle manufacturers were relieved.

However, even though they had a chance to breathe, this wasn't over.

Due to the new uncertainties in the electric vehicle industry, BYD and other companies had postponed releasing their latest cars. They had begun designing new vehicles that contained an air intake grill that would fit the standards of lithium-air batteries.

Even though fewer consumers were purchasing cars, due to the continued decline in electricity prices and the steady progress of domestic oil prices, the overall impact wasn't huge for them.

However, while the car manufactures were relieved, the car battery manufacturers were having a breakdown.

The boss, who finally made up his mind to upgrade the production line to lithium-sulfur batteries, had aged ten years overnight.

The electric vehicle industry was becoming more and more prosperous, but their products were outdated...

Zhongshan New Materials warehouse.

Liu Wanshan looked at the mountain of lithium-sulfur battery stock while smoking a cigarette.

Standing next to the boss was the secretary. The secretary wanted to complain but didn't know who to complain about...

“Is Star Sky Technology... planning on shutting us down?”

Liu Wanshan tapped the cigarette and sighed.

“This is a disaster.”

Even though the stock price of Zhongshan New Materials soared a while ago, their sales had plummeted.

Some small factories even breached their contracts and refused to buy more batteries. Hence, the large amount of stock in his warehouse.

The only positive side was that they weren't the only ones faced with this situation; the entire battery industry was upside down. Going further up the supply chain, the lithium material industry was also a mess

This wouldn't be lethal for them.

However, it would definitely hurt.

The secretary standing next to Liu Wanshan spoke.

“Boss, what do we... do now?”

Liu Wanshan took a drag and contemplated for a second before speaking.

“Turn off the battery production line temporarily, transfer some workers to the mobile battery production line. For the modified PDMS materials and HCS-2 materials production, urge downstream manufacturers to pay for them as soon as possible. We need the cash flow. When the lithium-air batteries come out, we will go full force ahead. In any case, we have to maintain cash flow and survive!”

The secretary nodded.

“Okay, I'll do that right now.”

Liu Wanshan looked at the pile of stock in the warehouse and felt a headache.

He walked out of the factory and threw his cigarette in a trash can. He looked back at the warehouse again.

Those batteries are worth tens of millions!

Liu Wanshan was unwilling to give up.

“No, I have to talk with Professor Lu.

“Star Sky Technology owns a part of us, they have to help us!”

Chapter 973 Professor Stanley’s Break

Even though lithium-air batteries had yet to exist, its news had already blinded people’s eyes. When an earthquake like this hit the industry, it was bound to affect the academic community.

Some people were amazed, some were unconvinced.

Some people were overjoyed, others were furious.

This affected billions of scientific research funding and countless people’s ability to complete their graduation thesis.

After all, most of the projects related to lithium-ion batteries had been cut. Even professors in this field were having a difficult time, much less their students...

At the North American materials science conference held in downtown Boston, Massachusetts.

Materials science experts from all over the world gathered here.

The main topic of this conference was going to be the latest research on molybdenum disulfide monolayer material, which was funded by Microsoft, Intel, and other companies. This material was favored by the academic community to be the future semiconductor material.

However, clearly something more significant had happened.

Lithium-air batteries overshadowed everything else.

During the first report at the conference, Professor Stanley walked on stage wearing a tuxedo. He announced the advent of the lithium-air battery era with a passionate tone, and how amazing his caged carbon molecule was...

This year's materials science conference went wild.

Most people thought this guy was being a pretentious prick.

Even though no one threw their shoe on stage, the entire report was in chaos.

Most research competitors were furious, and they placed all of their anger on Professor Stanley.

For example, Dr. Curtis from the Argonne National Laboratory.

In collaboration with Professor Amin Salehi Khojin from the University of Illinois, Chicago, they successfully created a method that achieved a 700-cycle lithium-air battery.

After the lithium dendrites problem was solved, they were able to increase this number to 900. Now, this number was in the 1000s.

If it weren't for the caged carbon molecules, they could have been the ones on stage presenting!

Even Professor Curtis, who was normally calm and collected, was boiling with rage. Curtis asked numerous questions during the Qu0026A session, in hopes of finding a problem with Stanley's caged carbon molecules.

Of course, Curtis knew that nothing would come of this...

The evening banquet was held in a five-star hotel next to the venue.

Professor Stanley was wearing a tuxedo, and his hair was shiny and slicked backward. He smiled arrogantly toward his peers and exchanged business cards with industry leaders.

The report went wonderfully for him.

Because Lu Zhou didn't personally come to the conference, as the inventor of the material, he was the center of attention.

Even though other scholars were unhappy at him, why should he care?

They were his enemies.

His priority was to network with these powerful industry leaders. They were the ones that could fund his research. All his peers did was laugh at him when he failed.

Actually, Professor Stanley had an epiphany.

He thought about it carefully and realized that other than humiliating him, Lu Zhou didn't do anything malicious.

The patent?

That was ExxonMobil's property anyway. He was the one who signed the research and development agreement.

Ruining his relationship with ExxonMobil?

His reputation in the industry?

He had indeed suffered quite a lot over the past six years, but now he was the center of attention among major companies.

So, why should he hold any grudges against Lu Zhou?

Stanley listened to people's compliments and watched as those that once abandoned him crawled back to him. He couldn't describe how happy he was.

The dean of the chemistry department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was an old professor who used to work with him in the battery field. The professor firmly shook his hand and said enthusiastically, "Congratulations, Professor Stanley! After lithium-air batteries enter the market, the Nobel Prize Committee will definitely consider you and Professor Lu for an award... Why don't you come to MIT? I think we can provide the resources and environment for your next project! I promise you'll be satisfied."

When Professor Stanley heard the name Professor Lu, his eyebrows twitched.

However, he wasn't new in the academic community.

Even though there was a twinge in his heart, he was able to control his emotions and speak gently with his old friend.

"Thanks... but Binghamton University has already promised to make me the head of the chemistry department... I don't plan on moving in the short term."

Even though the MIT professor was a little disappointed, he had nothing else to offer Stanley. It wasn't like he could give his job title to Stanley.

The MIT professor nodded and spoke.

"I understand. I mean, for us scholars, a stable environment is more important than anything... If you ever want to come to MIT, be sure to contact me."

Stanley nodded lightly.

"I definitely will."

Normally, he wouldn't speak this casually to the head of chemistry at MIT; after all, this person was also a board member of the American Chemical Society.

However, he was at the same level as this professor, or even a level higher.

While Professor Stanley was indulging in the attention, someone quickly walked into the banquet hall and found him.

Stanley saw the person and spoke with surprise.

"Woods? My dear friend, what... happened to you?"

Long gone was the sharp and bright person Stanley once knew; instead, the person standing in front of him looked aged and decrepit.

"Something happened." Woods took a deep breath and looked into Professor Stanley's eyes as he said, "Listen, we had some misunderstandings before, we cut off your research project, but now—"

"Stop right there," Professor Stanley said. "Just tell me, what do you want?"

"ExxonMobil wants you to come back," Woods said sincerely. "You are the inventor of the caged carbon molecules. We all know that this honor should belong to you, not that Chinese guy. We need a similar compound, something that won't conflict with their patent..."

After hearing Woods, Professor Stanley went silent for a while and sighed.

"Just give up, Woods, I know you don't want to, but he is not our enemy."

Woods froze for a second before he spoke anxiously.

“We’re just going to watch them rise to the top? Control the future of our energy industry? The nuclear power plant in California is about to be built, the lithium-air battery will crush the market! Everyone wants cleaner and cheaper energy. But think about how many jobs will be lost if oil prices plummet! If we don’t have the patent for lithium-air batteries, we have no room to fight back!”

Countless jobs lost...

Isn’t that what you greedy capitalists want?

Of course, Stanley would never say this out loud.

Professor Stanley paused for a second and looked at Woods.

“Listen, I know what you’re feeling right now, but what can we do? The patent clearly states the terms, unless you can convince Lu Zhou to sell you the patent... My advice is to forget about it.

“Also, I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but I’ve been doing very well over the past six years. A few days ago, I was angry, and I wanted to strangle that little sh*t, but now...

“My eyes are open.”

In reality, Stanley was scared.

He didn’t know if Lu Zhou planned all of these six years ahead, but he did know that his academic career was nearly ruined because of Lu Zhou.

Now that he had finally risen again, mostly due to Lu Zhou’s research, he never wanted to go against Lu Zhou again.

After all, he wasn’t young anymore.

He didn’t have any more time to waste in his career!

Professor Stanley shrugged and stared at Woods.

“As for the jobs lost, that’s Congress’ problem, not ours.”

Woods watched Stanley pat his shoulder and walk away. Stanley turned around and began chatting with the big names in the industry.

Woods stood there motionlessly for a while.

Suddenly, he looked down at the floor.

He muttered to himself, "Congress..."

"That is Congress' problem..."

"He's right!"

Chapter 974 Nuttier Than Lithium-Sulfur batteries

A lot of people had been visiting Lu Zhou recently.

First was the director of the State Administration for National Defense, then was a high-ranked official from the Energy Bureau. After that, Luo Wenxuan and Chen Yang asked him to help with the "quantum mechanical system of the random Hermitian matrix corresponding to the Riemann function" and the "Hodge conjecture". Lu Zhou just wanted to focus on his own research project, but he couldn't just refuse to help others either.

He was supposed to be working on the significance of the Riemann zeta function with Luo Wenxuan together, so he had to contribute, at least a little.

As for Chen Yang's research project, Chen Yang needed help with the hyperelliptic curve analysis method. Also, Lu Zhou was the one that said to ask him for help, thus making it even harder for him to refuse to help Chen Yang...

On the last Monday in March, Lu Zhou yawned as he walked out of the house. He was planning on going to the Jin University mathematics department building, but he saw a chubby man at his front gate, holding a gift bag with a smile on his face.

Lu Zhou paused for a second and spoke.

"CEO Liu? What are you..."

“It’s the holidays, I brought some gifts!”

Liu Wanshan walked through the front gate and said, “You scientists are working too hard, staying in the laboratory all day, I’m worried about your health. So I got some mountain herbs from Changbai Mountain. Add it to your soups, it’s good for cleansing toxins!”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Holidays...

Lu Zhou thought about it and realized that the only holidays coming up was Tomb-Sweeping Day and April Fool’s Day.

However, this was not the time to care about details.

Lu Zhou knew the CEO had good intentions, so he accepted CEO Liu’s gift and invited the CEO into his home.

Lu Zhou looked at the beautifully packaged ginseng, feng, and tuber fleece flower. He was a little baffled.

I’m perfectly healthy, why do I need all this stuff?

“You’re too kind.”

Lu Zhou poured Liu Wanshan a cup of tea as they sat down on the sofa. He then said, “I have to go to the university, so let’s skip the small talk. I know you like to get straight to the point.”

Liu Wanshan smiled awkwardly.

“I guess you know why I’m here, okay then.”

This normally composed and calm CEO spoke in an aggrieved tone.

“Remember how the alternative energy market was booming? I was thinking about how it’s a shame we’re only selling lithium material as it was a wasted opportunity. So I bought a small factory and also began assembling and producing lithium-sulfur batteries.”

Lu Zhou nodded and said, “What’s wrong with that?”

“The problem is your thesis.” Liu Wanshan patted his leg and sighed as he said, “When your thesis came out, especially when CTV reported it, the alternative energy industry plummeted to the floor.”

“A few weeks ago, we were doing fine, and we had more orders than we could handle. We even had to hire new people. However, now, we don’t have a single order! Not just that, but people are forfeiting their deposits and refusing to buy from us! Now we have a mountain of battery stock. We don’t make cars, what are we supposed to do!”

Lu Zhou frowned and said, “It would take months before lithium-air batteries are mass-producible. Also, this should be a good thing for the alternative energy industry.”

“I’m not afraid of new technology, it’s just that everyone wants to sit around and wait for this new technology to come out.” Liu Wanshan sighed and said, “It’s obviously good for electric vehicle companies, but for us small factories, this is a disaster.”

You think you’re a small factory?!

Lu Zhou looked at Liu Wanshan and couldn’t help but think.

You’re the CEO of a public company, can you man up?

However, I guess I did forget about this side of things.

Lu Zhou just wrote the paper according to Chen Yushan’s instructions. He didn’t expect the media and industry to overinterpret his thesis.

Lithium-air batteries do exist, but I didn’t say that in my paper!

Liu Wanshan looked at Lu Zhou and asked politely, “I’m not asking for anything ridiculous, but since you do own shares in Zhongshan New Materials, you should think about the factory workers... Maybe publish something that says that lithium-air battery technology will take a long time to produce, just give us some room to breathe.”

Liu Wanshan thought that writing a paper was a piece of cake for Lu Zhou.

Lu Zhou could even ask his students to write one for him.

However, Lu Zhou didn't think this way. He thought about the idea of writing another paper and instantly had a headache.

"I admit this is my fault; I didn't prepare well," Lu Zhou said. He coughed and continued, "But I won't write a paper like that, the most important trait in academia is seeking the truth. It's okay if I don't tell the full truth, but I won't speak anything but the truth!"

Not to mention that Chen Yushan told him that she was playing "4D chess".

Lu Zhou was curious about what kind of plan she had in mind.

Seeing how Academician Lu had no intention to help at all, Liu Wanshan was full of disappointment.

Of course, he didn't entirely blame Lu Zhou for not helping. First of all, he was in no position to blame Lu Zhou, and secondly, he understood Lu Zhou's reasons.

After all, Lu Zhou was the representative of China's academic community. That was more valuable than any company's profits.

Liu Wanshan got up and was planning on saying goodbye, but Lu Zhou suddenly spoke.

"Oh yeah, I nearly forgot, send some engineers from the factory to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study."

Liu Wanshan paused for a second and said, "Engineer?"

Lu Zhou nodded and said, "Yeah, I plan on integrating wireless charging technology with lithium-air batteries. You guys have experience in car battery production, and we have the lithium-air battery technology. We should work together."

Lu Zhou smiled.

"That depends on if you're interested in producing something nuttier than lithium-sulfur batteries."

Chapter 975 Terrifying Connections

Life was always full of ups and downs.

Who would have guessed that the shy kid talking to him at the Purple Mountain Hotel became a world-renowned university student?

Who would have guessed that a company making mixed carbon cement material would transform into an industry giant in the alternative energy field?

Liu Wanshan would have never imagined it. He thought that it would be amazing to reach the billion yuan mark, he never would have imagined earning billions in just a few years' time; he might even end up on Forbes soon...

He thought that the reason he stood here today was because of his tenacity and his willingness to seize opportunities.

Working with Professor Lu was an inflection point in his life.

Now that lithium-air batteries had become a reality, the era of printing money with lithium-sulfur batteries was over; the entire industry was being turned upside down...

Liu Wanshan felt like he was at another turning point in his life.

And this time, he hoped that he made the right decision...

High-tech zone area, Zhongshan New Materials factory.

Just a few days ago, Liu Wanshan was still worried about his overstocked inventory, but ever since he returned from Professor Lu's house, he had been as happy as a clam.

The assistant didn't know what was going on, so he walked up to CEO Liu and asked, "Hey, boss, what's the good news?"

Liu Wanshan smiled and said, "Go gather the senior engineers at the plant."

The assistant was confused, and he asked, "For what?"

Liu Wanshan smiled and said, "To help the Institute for Advanced Study! What else? Call Professor Li Rongen, he should be interested... Forget about it, I'll call him myself."

The assistant looked at the boss and said, “But those guys are the backbone of our factory, and we need them to adjust the production line. If we send them away... What’s going to happen to our factory?”

“Why are you in such a worry! Why would we need to adjust the production line, you don’t even know what we’re producing! From now on, shut off all electric vehicle lithium-sulfur batteries production and only focus on small-sized batteries!”

Seeing how the boss didn’t seem to be joking, the assistant began to sweat.

“But—”

“No buts, just do what I say!” Liu Wanshan laughed and said, “Once our engineers come back from the Institute for Advanced Study, you’ll realize how wise my decision is!”

...

Zhongshan New Materials urgently dispatched a team of engineers to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study. Beep Beep Charging, on the other hand, finally finished the relocation of their research and development team. They moved from Shanghai to the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

The process wasn’t smooth; in fact, they paid quite a price.

First of all, not everyone was happy to move for their job. And because of the recent changes in the company’s structure, people’s expectations of the company’s future had been disrupted. In the end, only five technicians were willing to follow Wang Qiang and to move to Jinling.

A week ago, there were a dozen technicians...

In addition to the loss of talent, what disappointed Wang Qiang the most, the Chief Technology Officer of Beep Beep Charging, was that these people didn’t receive the best hospitality at the Institute for Advanced Study...

One could even make the case that they were being mistreated.

What bothered him the most was that they had to move from Shanghai to Jinling because of Star Sky Technology, but now, the people at Star Sky were treating them coldly...

He almost wanted to resign!

“Did you bring the designs?”

Wang Qiang looked at the grumpy old man and nodded.

“I did.”

The old man frowned.

“Let me see.”

Wang Qiang took out the blueprint and handed it over.

The old man casually glanced at the blueprint designs.

Wang Qiang was expecting a comprehensive evaluation, but the old man snorted and spoke.

“What the hell is this?”

Wang Qiang nearly fainted.

Wang Qiang’s colleagues couldn’t stand this anymore, and a man with a bald cut stepped forward and spoke furiously.

“We spent months with our supervisor on this design! Let’s see your design then!”

“Brother Zhao, it’s fine.”

“Get off me!”

The old man looked at the young engineer and spoke with a smile.

“Who is your supervisor?”

Wang Qiang paused for a second and said, “Professor Liu Zhongpei, an electrical engineering professor from Aurora University!”

Even though Liu Zhongpei wasn’t an academician, nor was he in the Changjiang Scholars Program, he was still well known in his respective field and had participated in many scientific research projects.

For example, his supervisor worked on the Haizhou demonstration reactor project.

However, after hearing this name, the old man...

Didn't react at all.

"Liu Zhongpei?" The old man frowned and thought for a second. He then shook his head and said, "Don't know him."

No wonder these students created this garbage. I don't even know who their supervisor is.

Of course, the old man didn't say this out loud.

If he did, the student engineers might have punched him in the face.

However, even though the old man didn't say anything, his face told the whole story.

The researcher named Zhao couldn't stand this anymore.

"Who are you then?!"

"Me?" The old man raised his eyebrows and said, "Professor Lu asked me to help you, and he didn't tell you who I am?"

Wang Qiang froze.

So did the researcher named Zhao.

The other young researchers looked at one another.

When they first came to the Institute for Advanced Study, they were told to find Professor Wang, but they didn't know who this Wang person was...

No one had ever mentioned it to them.

The old man wasn't angry at the fact that the students didn't recognize him. Instead, he smiled and said, "Don't you millennials love using your phone? I'm Wang Zengguang, go find me on Baidu."

He shook his head and walked away.

Wang Qiang took out his phone and searched up the name. Someone behind him exclaimed, “Wang, Academician Wang Zengguang!”

Academician?

Wang Qiang looked at the researcher and spoke.

“You found him?”

The researcher nodded and handed over his phone.

Wang Qiang looked at the phone and instantly froze.

Academician Wang Zengguang!

The chief engineer of the China National Nuclear Corporation!

Leader in the domestic nuclear and electrical engineering industry! Worked on Pangu, ferrofluid electric energy, and other fusion reactor projects!

Wang Qiang finally remembered who this person was.

Wang Qiang knew this old man looked familiar; that was the reason he took the criticism so quietly.

But now, he finally realized why the old man looked familiar...

Back when Wang Qiang was still in school...

Wang Qiang remembered his supervisor talking about someone else other than Lu Zhou, who was a god in the field of nuclear engineering.

It turned out that his supervisor’s idol was Academician Wang. Academician Wang’s ferrofluid electric energy generator was even taught in textbooks around the country...

Wang Qiang was shocked.

He finally realized why CEO Li was so confident that Star Sky Technology could guide them to success, that he even refused help from Tesla.

I can’t believe Lu Zhou was able to get this guy to help us...

There's no way we won't succeed!

Chapter 976 Standards

jin university, mathematics department building. the phone was ringing, and academician wang was the one calling. the second the phone was connected, a hearty voice came through the phone.

“old lu, those guys you brought aren't the best!”

when lu zhou heard “old lu”, he nearly spat out the water in his mouth.

lu zhou snorted and felt his eyes tearing up. he coughed for a while before saying, “can you not call me old? i'm at least a generation younger than you!”

even though i'm approaching my thirties, i'm still in my twenties! i look older than i am, but still...

this is ridiculous!

“hahaha!” academician wang zengguang smiled and said, “you're the one asking me for help, i came here all the way from beijing. what, i can't give you a nickname?”

lu zhou: “...”

lu zhou was speechless.

most people would never be able to ask this nuclear industry legend for help. regardless of what nickname he was calling him, academician wang was still doing lu zhou a favor.

seeing how lu zhou wasn't responding, academician wang zengguang smiled and spoke.

“i took a look at your charging project. the technology and designs are a mess, but it is interesting. i am a little confused, why are you connecting wireless charging technology with lithium-air batteries? i think there's no reason to connect these two together since they work fine independently.”

lu zhou: “actually... i’m not sure. i’m just a scholar, i don’t understand a lot of things outside of academia. but my ceo told me about it and i thought it was interesting, so i asked you for help.”

academician wang zengguang said, “oh? what did your ceo say?”

lu zhou smiled.

“to be the one that sets the standards!”

even though lithium-air batteries had nothing to do with wireless charging, if star sky technology had control of both of these technologies, they could combine the technologies together and require both of them to be used at the same time.

hence, other companies would have two options, either pay a high price for refusing to follow the standards or compromise with star sky technology and cater to their established rules.

this might not be beneficial in the short term, but when star sky technology became the standard for the entire electric vehicle industry...

even if there were companies that wanted to go against the tide, it would be too late to do so.

by that time, they would have to face the pressure from star sky technology’s patents...

the other end of the phone went silent.

suddenly, he laughed.

“standards setter? sounds interesting.” academician wang smiled and said, “okay then, i have nothing better to do, i’ll help you! oh yeah, i have high standards. if some of those noob researchers end up quitting, don’t blame me.”

“of course not!” lu zhou smiled and said nonchalantly, “they can quit if they want, they’re all replaceable. as long as one person remains and we train them into an academic leader, it will be worth it.”

after that, they made some small talk and ended the phone call.

just after academician wang hung up the phone, his office door opened. a middle-aged researcher wearing glasses walked in with a document.

“this is the revised plan,” yao hong said as he placed the document on the table. he pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose and said, “i made them re-do the important parts.”

after taking a glance at the revised plan, academician wang nodded with satisfaction.

“not bad.”

my students are amazing, this plan is much better.

yao hong looked at academician wang and suddenly said, “professor.”

academician wang looked at his student and put down the revised plan.

“what’s wrong?”

yao hong hesitated for a bit before speaking his truest thoughts.

“should we... really help them?”

“star sky technology is a private company, and beep beep charging... we’re helping them for free.”

academician wang looked at his student and spoke with a smile.

“so you’re saying we’re abusing the public trust?”

yao hong nodded.

“even though we’re not using state funding and laboratories, but research and development is also part of social resources—”

academician wang interrupted his student and said, “you can’t blindly follow rules, a scholar should be flexible.”

“but—”

“if you think we’re abusing social resources, have you thought about what they have done for society? who created controllable nuclear fusion energy? star

sky technology is a private company, but do you see professor lu holding any nuclear fusion patents?"

after listening to his supervisor's words, yao hong was speechless.

however, he didn't want to give up, so he added, "but... nuclear fusion technology was the result of everyone's efforts, so the patent shouldn't belong to him alone."

"oh, really now?" academician wang smiled and shook his head. he said, "if he didn't come back to china and stayed at the max planck society, you don't think he could've created a nuclear fusion reactor in germany? you're saying that we could've solved nuclear fusion alone?"

"but..." yao hong awkwardly said, "he's chinese, china is his home."

"yeah, it's his home."

academician wang nodded and spoke nostalgically, "this is our home, we all want this place to be better. that's why he gave up his opportunities and came back here. he traveled with his research team all over the country and didn't complain one bit. so, do you really think we're doing him the favor here?"

academician wang stopped talking.

he looked at his student and smiled.

"also, i'm interested in his plans.

"one day, we'll become the standard setters of the world. we'll be the kings of electricity. every country will have to act according to our rules.

"hopefully, that day will come soon..."

academician wang reached out and gently patted his student on the shoulder as he spoke in a solemn tone.

"so, stop trying to create enemies!

"we're on the same team!"

Chapter 977 Not the Same Family

It often took years before a product could go from research and development to production.

That was normally the case.

However, when it came to the China National Nuclear Corporation, it often took much less time.

Not just because of Wang Zengguang's own experience and strength, but also because of his networks in the electrical engineering field.

Even if he encountered a problem he couldn't solve, he could easily find an expert to help him solve the problem.

Of course, even though he was more than capable, most of the design work was still done by Beep Beep Charging's team.

This was Lu Zhou's request.

"... Not bad, just follow the design." Academician Wang looked at the new design and handed the blueprints back to Wang Qiang.

It was almost like a weight had been lifted off Wang Qiang's shoulders, and he sighed in relief.

The past month was hell for him and his research and development team.

Not just because of the lack of manpower, but also because they had to deal with the expert from the China National Nuclear Corporation.

Academician Wang's student, Yao, often criticized and nitpicked their work, making them do the same thing over and over again...

Even though he wanted to give up, he thought about how much he had given up by moving all the way from Shanghai and decided to persevere.

Academician Wang looked at Wang Qiang and smiled.

“Nicely done. To tell you the truth, I thought you guys were going to quit. I was going to get some people from the China National Nuclear Corporation and give the project to Academician Lu.”

Wang Qiang held the designs in his hand tightly. He then took a deep breath and asked, “Can I ask a question?”

Academician Wang took a sip of tea and spoke to the young man standing in front of his desk.

“Go ahead.”

“Since the China National Nuclear Corporation is so powerful... Why aren’t the people from there doing this project? If you think we’re incapable, why not fire us? You can easily find someone better.”

Wang Qiang knew his question was a little strange.

Because there was no reason for the China National Nuclear Corporation to help Star Sky Technology.

However, Chief Engineer Academician Wang was willing to guide them on this project.

After hearing Wang Qiang’s question, Wang Zengguang smiled.

“A month ago, I asked Academician Lu a question over the phone. I’m a perfectionist. I was afraid my standards would force you guys to quit. Guess what Academician Lu said?”

Wang Qiang thought for a long time and shook his head.

“I don’t know.”

Academician Wang smiled and said, “He said, you guys can quit if you want, someone else will take your place! But if one of you guys stays behind, it will be worth it!”

Academician Wang looked at Wang Qiang and spoke.

“So I was surprised to see all five of you still working here. This is more important than wireless charging stations.

“As the leader of this project, I hope you will remember that technology is always relative, and there will be one day where a piece of technology becomes outdated, but...” Academician Wang reached out and gently poked Wang Qiang’s forehead before saying, “Only knowledge and creativity last forever.”

Technology is always relative...

Wang Qiang finally understood why Academician Lu didn’t care about losing manpower, and why Academician Lu insisted on them working on the project personally.

The ones that quit just weren’t meant to be.

The technology could always be improved.

The important part wasn’t their abilities, but it was their determination to become better and cultivate their courage to complete an almost impossible task.

Academician Lu could easily receive help from the China National Nuclear Corporation, and the entire nuclear energy industry in China would be more than happy to help him with the charging station project.

However, Lu Zhou didn’t only care about technology.

What he wanted was a scientific research team that could continuously develop new and creative technologies!

Just like how he cultivated talents for the controllable nuclear fusion and aerospace industry, even though he left the ion thruster and nuclear fusion field, the technology was still being improved.

Academician Wang looked at the young man and nodded.

He knew that the young man understood his words, so he stood up and smiled.

“Okay, the first-generation design of the wireless charging stations is in your hand. I won’t bother you guys anymore. I’ll call Academician Lu tonight and go back to Beijing tomorrow. I have one piece of advice, which is to continue

trying your best, whether it's this charging station project or something else, your future is limitless!"

"Thank you." Wang Qiang went silent for a while and suddenly said, "Can I call you teacher?"

Academician Wang smiled and spoke.

"If you want to. I've taught you guys many things, so it wouldn't be inappropriate. Oh yeah, what do you plan on calling this thing?"

Wang Qiang paused for a second and spoke.

"BB... BB charging."

"BB?" Academician Wang looked at him in disbelief as he said, "I know your company is called BB, but you're calling the product BB as well?"

Wang Qiang: "Yeah... Is there a problem?"

Academician Wang opened his mouth and asked, "Did Academician Lu come up with this name?"

"No..." Wang Qiang scratched his head and said, "CEO Li... Beep Beep Charging CEO Li Tinghui came up with the name. Apparently, Academician Lu was going to change the name, but he didn't end up changing it. Is there a problem with this name?"

"Nothing, I was just wondering... You guys are on your own now, I have to go."

Academician Wang looked at his student and signaled him to follow him. They then walked to the door of the office.

The old academician was about to leave the office when he suddenly sighed and spoke.

"It takes one to know one."

"I guess Old Lu just likes people who are horrible at naming things!"

Yao Hong, who was next to Academician Wang, nearly tripped on the floor.

Academician Wang laughed and spoke.

“Take it easy.”

Yao Hong looked at his supervisor and spoke.

“Oh, okay...”

I guess naming abilities and academic abilities are inversely related...

No wonder I'm not as smart as Professor Lu...

Chapter 978 Product Creation!
entrepreneurship was a very difficult thing.

especially if someone wanted to expand their business, not only did that require extraordinary vision and ten times the passion of one's competitors, but one would also have to work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week...

even though li tinghui was prepared for the tough times, he didn't expect it would be this torturous...

within a month, lu zhou wanted him to sign contracts with all of the major shopping malls in shanghai. the only feeling he felt was despair.

he hadn't had a single good night of sleep in march; he was out all day, negotiating with shopping mall executives.

even though he was backed by star sky technology, which meant chen yushan could arrange the meetings for him, he still had to be the one on the battlefield.

after all, they were only a subsidiary of star sky technology, it would be great if they succeeded, but if they didn't...

neither academician lu nor chen yushan would really care.

fortunately, he was still surviving.

the day after tomb-sweeping day.

li tinghui was asleep at his office, and he felt like he was close to being put in a tomb himself.

if it weren't for the ringing sound of the office telephone, he would have never woken up.

"hello...?" li tinghui rubbed his eyes and cleared his throat. he said, "this is beep beep charging—"

"ceo li!" wang qiang, the chief technology officer, said, "our product design is finished!"

"finished?!"

it was almost like li tinghui was hit with a defibrillator, and he instantly became energized.

"the product is finished? really? how long until production? can it be done by the end of the month?"

wang qiang took a deep breath and said, "i don't know how long until production, but it should be done before the end of the month! i talked with the engineers from zhongshan new materials that are visiting the institute for advanced study. they told us that this is a done deal!"

"also, i heard they're also working with star sky technology on lithium-air batteries, and if they produce the charging stations for us, they'll also help us with the lithium-air battery compatibility issues!"

"perfect!"

li tinghui stood up from his chair excitedly and walked around. however, because of the telephone cord, he could only walk in a small circle.

the charging station design is complete!

this is the best news i've heard all month!

his chief technology officer was telling him that not only was the design work finished, but the production line was about to begin!

li tinghui swore that if he had the money, he would give everyone in his team 10,000 yuan in bonuses...

he took a deep breath and calmed down, speaking in a serious tone.

“i’ll deal with the cooperation side tomorrow... no, i’ll go to jinling this afternoon! i’ll try to get this done as soon as possible. we should start delivering equipment by the end of the month!”

wang qiang was astonished, and he said, “the negotiations with the malls... are finished?”

he heard that ceo li had been trying to sign deals with major shopping malls even before financing with star sky technology. apparently, ceo li tried to convince them to install stations at their charging stations. however, ceo li wasn’t able to close any deals.

after all, most shopping malls already had their own charging stations. even though they weren’t wireless, they were good enough. having wireless charging stations sounded pretty cool, but how many cars were wireless charging compatible anyway?

if this were tesla or byd, the malls might have been more interested. but this was a non-name startup, so no one believed in their “wireless charger”!

li tinghui had a smug smile on his face; gone was his fatigue, replaced by confidence and enthusiasm.

“over 80% of large and medium-sized shopping malls in shanghai have expressed interest in cooperating with us for one year or more than half a year. if the market feedback is good, they will consider outsourcing more parking spaces for our chargers. there are already 20 small businesses in rural areas that are also interested!

“all we need to do now is to produce the chargers!”

he spoke with momentum.

“winning this fight depends on satisfying our customers!

“we can’t let them down!”

...

when the days got busy, time always flew by quickly.

the last saturday in april.

may was right around the corner, and major shopping malls in shanghai were preparing for various promotional events. even though the national week-long holiday was still a few days away, people had begun overflowing the malls.

people from the yangpu district and other rural areas drove to the wujiaochang shopping mall.

the parking garage in this large shopping mall had a row of gold-painted parking lots, attracting attention from customers.

“beep beep charging exclusive charging spot, wireless charging... scan qr code to charge? what is this?”

“can this charge any car?”

“forget about it, of course it can’t charge gasoline cars. i think the electric car has to have a special battery receiver.”

“f*ck sake! what’s the point, so i have to spend thousands of yuan just to charge wirelessly?!”

“not necessarily, you can just charge it normally with a cable. however, it seems like they’re claiming that wireless charging is faster.”

while the two car owners were talking, another car owner walked out of their car and couldn’t help but join in on the conversation.

“it’s not about the charging speed, you’re not keeping up with the times! the entire venture capital world went crazy a while ago! professor lu invested in some wireless charging station company. it’s called beep beep charging! they plan on bundling wireless charging together with lithium-air batteries! any lithium-air battery will have a wireless charging receiver!”

people around them who were taking photos also overheard the conversation...

they were shocked.

scan the qr code to charge!

not a big deal...

register to get a 100 yuan coupon!

not a big deal either...

only one dime of service fee!

that wasn't a huge deal either; after all, civilian, commercial, and industrial electricity prices were getting cheaper and cheaper.

but combining lithium-air batteries and wireless charging together...

that was a big deal.

regardless of whether it was a rumor or not, people began posting this story to their wechat friends' news feed!

Scholar's Advanced Technological System - Chapter 979 - Card up the Sleeve -

Chapter 979 Card up the Sleeve

the first-day launch of beep beep charging was quite popular.

lithium-air batteries sounded like something out of a science fiction movie; even though not everyone was driving electric vehicles, most people were curious.

all kinds of gossip and stories had spread around on social media.

the national holiday brought the popularity of beep beep charging to a whole new peak!

even owners of gasoline cars were interested in this novel technology; some people even registered an account just to post it on social media.

registering an account was free anyway.

regardless, the marketing campaign was very successful. both li tinghui and the mall didn't expect the "lithium-air battery + wireless charging" combination to be this popular. the shopping mall even saw a surge in customer traffic.

li tinghui looked at the increasing user registrations and felt relieved.

regardless of whether the future follow-up would go as smoothly...

at least this phase was over!

actually, wireless charging wasn't super high-tech stuff.

wireless charging technology had already been extensively researched and developed internationally.

for example, when audi developed their new electric vehicles, they designed a solution to reduce transmission efficiency loss. their solution was to use a liftable wireless charging system and move the transmission coil closer to the bottom of the electric car, thereby improving the power transmission efficiency.

this could be traced back to 2014, when south korea planned on building a 12-km long "wireless charging road". however, due to its high maintenance cost, this project was never completed.

beep beep charging, on the other hand, had a three-step strategy. the first was to occupy more than 80% of the shopping malls and residential parking lots in shanghai. the second step was to extend throughout large-sized commercial districts in the yangtze river delta city group, eventually expanding throughout the country.

as for the third step, which was the ultimate form of this technology, was a wireless charging road. which meant a 50% coverage of the entire yangtze river delta highway network.

of course, they had to take it one step at a time.

however, it seemed like this startup was getting quite scary...

jinling institute for advanced study.

carbon-based semiconductor laboratory.

a group of people wearing white coats were busy working in front of a piece of experimental equipment.

after several months of hard work, by cooperating with shenyang machine tool and baosheng group, they were finally able to create this “chemical vapor deposition + etching” machine.

this machine was like the lithography machine in the field of carbon-based semiconductors. it was able to preliminary process raw materials and “stick” the carbon nano transistors onto a double-layered graphene material at a specific angle.

a few months ago, the carbon-based semiconductor laboratory was only able to achieve transistors with a width of 150nm, but now, this number had been reduced to 80nm.

other than high processor performance electronics such as computers and mobile devices, 80nm based chips were applicable in many places.

the smaller the transistor size, the better. however, most fields didn’t require that much processing power.

for example, surveillance and networking equipment...

of course, this semiconductor laboratory wasn’t planning on making security camera processors. nor did they have anything to do with the latest “dragon one” series of chips. instead, they were related to the latest wireless charging technology.

when a sound of gas emission was heard, the researchers surrounding the experimental equipment gasped.

as they looked at the data presented on the computer, professor wu tianqun had a look of ecstasy on his face.

“we did it!”

lu zhou, who was standing nearby, asked, “it’s done?”

“yeah!” professor wu tianqun nodded and replied confidently, “it could’ve been better! i’ll show it to you later!”

lu zhou didn’t have to wait for long.

soon after, a thumbnail-sized processor was removed from the equipment.

lu zhou looked at the chip stored in a brown-tinted glass cover. he looked both shocked and relieved.

this was the second chip produced by the carbon-based semiconductor laboratory.

the first one was used on the calculator; there was nothing special about it. as for this one, it would be used in wireless charging receiver and transmitter devices, hence it was considered high tech.

everyone knew that because of problems related to electromagnetic conversion, wireless charging technology could roughly be divided into two parts—receiving and transmitting. specifically, the magnetic materials, the chips, the coil module, scheme design, etc.

the coil module and magnetic material were easy to deal with. they weren't considered high tech, nor did they have any patent barriers. however, the chips were different.

almost all of the technical difficulty was concentrated in the design of the receiver chip and system integration.

so far, the main customers of these technologies were mobile phones. however, electric vehicles were also soon going to be a customer of this technology.

in fact, other than developing chips in-house, beep beep charging had many international chip manufacturers to choose from. actually, the first batch of charging station chips was produced by international manufacturers.

however, huawei's hisilicon, which star sky technology owned a part of, had shifted from "pure research and development" to "research and development + production". hence, it would be a waste to not use the carbon-based chips.

when the time came, they would replace all of the internationally produced chips with their own chips.

as professor wu tianqun looked at the chip in lu zhou's hand, he spoke like an excited child.

"oh my god, after two months, we finally did it! we should give this a good name!"

in fact, professor wu didn't want lu zhou's input at all; he was just too emotional.

unfortunately, lu zhou began to think about it seriously.

a good name?

sounds difficult...

lu zhou thought for a long time. professor wu tianqun was about to take the chip away and put it in storage before lu zhou spoke.

"we'll call it... bb system."

wu tianqun: "...?"

researchers: "... ???"

lu zhou: "?"

suddenly...

the atmosphere became awkward.

lu zhou didn't know why these noob researchers were staring at him.

emmmm...

is something wrong with this name?

just when lu zhou began to wonder if this was a good name, professor wu tianqun broke the silence.

"um... this name won't work. first of all, it doesn't sound nice. also, this is different from the beep beep charging stations; people will mix the two together!"

"you're right," lu zhou said. seeing how so many people disagreed with his name, he said, "so what do you think we should name it?"

wu tianqun spoke firmly.

"thor!"

“thor?”

“yeah!” wu tianqun nodded and explained, “god of thunder, shocking the entire world! this name is perfect!”

“makes sense...” lu zhou contemplated for a while before he nodded reluctantly. “thor it is!”

Chapter 980 Exclusive Agreemen

even though lu zhou didn’t think the name “thor” was particularly good, seeing how the noob researchers in the laboratory seemed to like the name, he reluctantly agreed.it would take a while before the system was actually deployed, so they could still change the name at a later date.

as for when they were going to deploy the technology...

they would at least wait until the dragon series of chips were born.

the continued rise in the popularity of beep beep charging attracted the attention of evgo, which was also trying to expand into the shanghai market.

the tesla china division did not implement an aggressive marketing strategy; instead, they directly went to negotiate with major shopping malls, signing favorable contracts with them.

just like bobby had expected, almost none of the malls rejected the opportunity of having tesla-branded charging stations in their parking lots, just like how no mall would reject having a louis vuitton store.

having such a well-known brand would increase customer flow.

what bobby didn’t expect was that inside the parking lot of a yida plaza mall parking lot, no one was gathering around the tesla-evgo charging stations. instead, all of the attention was on the beep beep charging stations...

even though this didn’t make him feel frustrated or worried, he still reported this to his superior, elon musk.

“it seems like we have an absolute advantage in the shanghai business district areas, but beep beep charging is also expanding...” bobby paused for a second and said, “star sky technology is following our footsteps. if they continue to grow, they will catch up to us in six months in terms of coverage.

“my suggestion is to sign an exclusive agreement with large and medium-sized shopping malls, for them to cooperate with us on charging stations. we should not allow other companies to obtain parking lot spaces for their charging stations!”

after hearing bobby’s words, elon smiled and spoke.

“we’re not going to do that.”

bobby paused for a second.

“why?”

elon smiled and spoke casually.

“i’m sure you already know that the company in charge of beep beep charging is well versed in internet marketing. if an american company like us signed an exclusive agreement with a chinese shopping mall, our name would be plastered all over the internet. the mall would be pressured to cancel our contract.

“because if they don’t cancel their contracts, the state would intervene.”

bobby frowned and said, “so we’re just going to watch them grow like this? i don’t like their business model, but if this goes on, it might impact our business—”

“i know, mr. bobby,” elon interrupted him and said, “i never said to just leave them alone, we should use other measures.”

after hearing elon’s words, bobby calmed down and listened.

“evgo has coverage in shanghai of over 85%, not to mention that mercedes, volkswagen, and other car companies plan on signing charging station contracts with us. our charging stations will be fitted with specific interfaces...”

“evgo will be the only officially recognized electric vehicle charging station in china!”

bobby's eyes began to light up.

oh my...

elon is a genius!

regardless of whether or not the evgo charging stations were smarter than other companies' charging stations, just the tesla name itself was able to make people subconsciously choose the evgo brand.

in comparison, the wireless charging feature beep beep charging was offering would be insignificant.

out of convenience, people would always choose wireless charging, but at the end of the day, they cared more about safety and stability. that was exactly what evgo offered.

bobby took a deep breath and said, "i know what to do."

"good." elon smiled and said, "we don't have to sign an exclusive agreement with the chinese."

obtaining exclusive contracts and suppressing the downstream industry would violate antitrust regulations and free trade laws.

but were there any laws in business?

elon wasn't going to look down on beep beep charging just because it was a small company, and he would do everything he could to protect his territory...

the reason was simple.

it was because of the man behind the beep beep charging company.

elon would never forget what happened in the aerospace field...

he would never allow himself to underestimate his opponent again!

"oh yeah, our goal is the yangtze river delta city group, not just shanghai. remember what i told you the last time i came to china? the yangtze river delta will become the city center of the entire western pacific region."

“an important investor will visit you in three days. if everything goes well, we can get at least a billion usd in funding.

“you got this!”

bobby nodded solemnly.

“okay!”

...

jinling.

institute for advanced study, director’s office.

lu zhou would often come to his office to discuss important matters.

one was because of its tidiness, the other was because of security.

his jin university office was messy and chaotic.

chen yushan was sitting on the sofa. she took a sip of tea and spoke to lu zhou, who was sitting behind his desk.

“tesla has taken action. reliable sources say that they are talking with volkswagen. if they sign a deal, they’ll issue a statement and designate evgo as the officially supported charging station.”

lu zhou put down his pen and nodded.

“so you guessed it right again.”

chen yushan: “not guessing, i knew this was going to happen. finding outside help is the best solution for them, and there is little risk involved. as long as they have control over the yangtze river delta region, they’ll never lose money.”

the cost of antitrust investigations wasn’t negligible.

however, if tesla could form a monopoly, they would still be able to turn a profit.

not to mention that the possibility of an antitrust investigation was low...

even though lu zhou didn't know a lot about business, he was still curious as to what chen yushan planned on doing.

"then what do you plan on doing?"

chen yushan smirked.

"didn't i tell you two months ago? i plan on playing 4d chess."

lu zhou said, "you're still playing chess?"

lu zhou nearly forgot about this.

what kind of chess game takes two months...

"i already finished the chess game."

chen yushan smirked and said, "the show is about to begin."

Chapter 981 The Company Seems to Be in Trouble

A tall skyscraper stood in the middle of Shanghai's CBD. This was Tesla's headquarters in China. It was Tesla's second construction investment in China, behind the super factory. The building overlooked the western Pacific Ocean, like it was a lighthouse, guiding businessmen toward the international market...

Of course, there were many other lighthouses.

Ever since clean energy appeared in Asia, more and more international capital had begun flowing here, trying to take advantage of the energy revolution.

The top floor of the building, inside the boardroom.

Tesla's China General Manager, Bobby, was meeting with an important client from Boston— David Lawrence.

In the United States, Lawrence was a common surname, but the Lawrence surname in Boston had an extraordinary meaning.

The Lawrence family was involved in the financial industry, and the name was frequently mentioned together with their friends, Lowell and Adams.

When North America was still a small colony, these people were the first ones to get rich. They invested in the banking industry and relied on these financial institutions to indirectly give them control over the heavy industrial chain.

After the two industrial revolutions, they were unsatisfied and entered a political alliance with the Kennedy family.

And this gave birth to the Boston Financial Group.

After relying on military arms orders during the Vietnam war, the unbreakable alliance gradually collapsed.

After that, the Boston Financial Group disappeared from people's minds.

However, two centuries of heritage and wealth didn't just disappear out of thin air.

Even though they rarely appeared in the eyes of the public, they influenced the world in secret ways...

Bobby stood by the floor-to-ceiling windows in the conference room, looking at the neon street lights. Bobby smiled and spoke to the man standing next to him.

"As you can see, we are facing the most prosperous land in the west pacific. Do you see that river? More than half of China's wealth flows through that river."

Bobby tried to do his best to please this important guest.

Tesla's expansion in Shanghai and the Yangtze River Delta city group required capital. Even though Chinese banks were happy to lend them money, the interest wasn't cheap.

Therefore, the best option for Tesla was to receive financing from outside the country.

If the Boston Financial Group was interested and invested in EVgo, there was no doubt that EVgo's expansion in China would go smoothly.

Even though these financial giants were often ruthless, they would never turn down an opportunity to make free money together...

"This is a beautiful city, much better than Boston."

Lawrence smiled faintly. He didn't speak like a clueless tourist; instead, he spoke like a wise businessman who was aware of the value of goods standing in front of him.

Bobby glanced at Lawrence's face and spoke.

"Endless energy. We used to think it was just a fantasy, but someone really did it.

"I've worked here for four years, and I've watched this place move forward one step at a time. Even the Americans can't believe that the Chinese are growing vegetables in skyscrapers, building maglev trains, and still remain profitable."

"Growing vegetables in skyscrapers?" Lawrence asked with curiosity.

"Someone is doing that. Apparently, it's called three-dimensional agriculture... You know, Asia goes crazy over fresh, natural food. They don't care if it's expensive." Bobby cleared his throat and said, "What I'm saying is, don't you think it's a waste they're using their resources this way!"

"Yeah..." Lawrence nodded. He looked at the night scene as he said, "Talk about your project, maybe it'll interest me."

Bobby smiled and spoke.

"Of course."

Bobby was about to talk about the plan to Lawrence when a middle-aged man in a suit suddenly knocked on the meeting room door and walked in.

Lawrence looked at his assistant and frowned.

"Is something wrong, Mr. Jonard?"

"I'm sorry to interrupt your meeting, but I have something important for you."

Lawrence glanced at Bobby and smiled.

“Is it related to this gentleman beside me?”

Jonard nodded seriously and handed Lawrence a stack of documents.

Lawrence said, “Oh, it is?”

Lawrence took over the documents from his assistant and looked apologetically at Bobby.

A million thoughts began to race through Bobby’s mind.

Even though he wasn’t happy, he didn’t dare to offend Lawrence. Thus, he could only stand there and watch Lawrence read the documents.

Time quickly passed by.

Lawrence was almost done with the documents.

Bobby was getting impatient when Lawrence frowned. Bobby instantly began to feel nervous.

“It seems like your company is in a bit of trouble.”

Bobby looked at Lawrence and spoke.

“What?”

“A Chinese company seems to pose a threat to your core business model.” Lawrence smiled and said, “It seems like you’re at a disadvantage here.”

Disadvantage?!

“You’re talking about Beep Beep Charging?” Bobby smiled and said, “No offense, but this is not the case at all. We’ve already signed with five major car companies, they—”

“I know about the cooperation agreements with the car companies. Also, don’t doubt my guy’s abilities.” Lawrence ripped off two pages from one of the documents and handed it to Bobby. He said, “Since you’re being so honest with me, I’ll show you something... Usually, we charge half a million dollars per page.”

After Bobby took the pages from Lawrence, he began to impatiently read the contents. Bobby wanted to know why Lawrence had changed his mind about financing EVgo.

However, the moment his eyes landed on the page, his heart skipped a beat!

“That as*hole!” Bobby clenched his fist and said, “They’re violating free trade laws! This is illegal!”

Bobby noticed that Lawrence was looking at him, so he tried to calm down and forced a smile on his face.

“Lawrence, I hope this doesn’t affect our cooperation. If we sue them, the judge will be on our side...”

“Really? The judge will be on your side?” Lawrence shrugged and said, “Of course, I don’t want this to affect our cooperation...”

Bobby smiled and extended his right hand. “Then I wish us a happy cooperation. I know a good restaurant nearby, should we—”

“But I have to think about it, weigh the risks and benefits...” Lawrence looked at his watch and said, “As for dinner, I’m going to pass. I have another important meeting...”

After that, he gave the documents back to Jonard and nodded.

Jonard stepped forward and opened the door.

“I hope to hear good news from you the next time we meet,” Lawrence said as he began walking out of the door. “See you later.”

The conference door closed.

Bobby looked at the closed door in disbelief.

He suddenly turned around and slammed his fist on the conference table.

“F*ck!”

He could feel his blood pressure rising.

Just like Lawrence had said, they were in trouble...

Chapter 982 Bundling Patents

The public holiday week wasn't over yet. While the public was still talking about Beep Beep Charging and their wireless charging technology, two pieces of news suddenly caught the attention of everyone. The first was on Star Sky Technology.

In the latest press conference, a Star Sky Technology spokesperson acknowledged that they had made a breakthrough in lithium-air batteries and had already completed the production of the first-generation lithium-air batteries.

The news itself wasn't shocking; after Professor Lu's paper came out, most people had expected this to happen sooner or later.

The only unexpected thing was how fast everything was happening.

Immediately after the press conference, Zhongshan New Materials' stock price flew to the sky.

Hundreds of millions of market value came out of thin air...

Of course, even though this was surprising, most people had expected to see this coming. It wasn't sensational.

What was really shocking was the second piece of news.

Which was a rumor that Star Sky Technology was bundling lithium-air batteries and wireless charging technology together, thus wireless charging and lithium-air batteries were inseparable.

The spokesperson of Star Sky Technology said that they believed that better technology meant a higher quality of life, thus wireless charging technology and lithium air batteries should be as one.

This was quite a strong statement, as the market was still deciding whether the technology meant a higher quality of life.

This statement shocked the electric vehicle industry.

Star Sky Technology also made a similar announcement on its website.

Which was the bundling of wireless charging and lithium-air batteries!

Moreover, the wireless charging technology was completely different from the standards set by PMA and A4WP; it was their own proprietary standards.

The electric vehicle industry was already scared of the new lithium-air batteries, but this move by Star Sky Technology was like an earthquake.

Not only did the companies invested in lithium-sulfur batteries had to change to lithium-air batteries, but they also had to comply with new wireless charging standards.

Oh, what's that?

You have your own wireless charging technology?

Good for you?

Star Sky Technology didn't care if you had your own Qi standard or A4WP standard wireless charging technology. From now on, if anyone wanted to use lithium-air batteries, they had to comply with Star Sky's own standards.

For example, they would have to pay an expensive patent fee for lithium-air batteries...

An online forum.

The news had been widely discussed.

Both electric vehicle owners and gasoline car owners were talking about this matter.

[F*ck me, Star Sky Technology is planning on dominating this field!]

[Does anyone here know what it means to bundle wireless charging and lithium-air batteries together?]

[It means that if you want to use the lithium-air battery patents from Star Sky Technology, you have to also purchase a set of wireless charging technology patents! You also have to sign a wireless charging compatibility agreement! Otherwise, Star Sky Technology can collect a certain amount of patent fees, proportional to the vehicle price.]

[F*ck sake, isn't this price gouging?]

[Yeah, but what can we do? Unless we can get around the patent barriers of Star Sky Technology, we have to pay! This is like Qualcomm, you have to pay the price of using their chips.]

[They're doing this to fight against Tesla... EVgo just announced their plans on entering the Chinese market. I see Tesla-branded charging stations all over Shanghai. Apparently, their coverage is 85%! If all lithium-air batteries have to use Star Sky Technology's wireless charging technology, then Tesla's charging stations will become useless.]

[Let's see what happens, Tesla is definitely going to make a move, the Americans won't give up...]

In fact, as the head of the electric vehicle industry, Tesla expressed its disappointment toward this move, and the company hoped that Star Sky Technology would reconsider its decision.

In the latest press conference, Musk was faced with questions one after another. He couldn't help but feel annoyed.

"We are happy to see Star Sky Technology contributing to the electric vehicle industry! Don't be mistaken, I am happy!

"But I hope they can reconsider. If they really want to help the electric vehicle industry, they should dig a pit and bury themselves in it!"

Technological progress was a good thing for society as it meant that people would have more choices. However, this was a threat to certain businesses.

The latest issue of The New York Times quoted Elon's statement at the press conference and his concern about the emergence of lithium-air battery technology.

Fast technological progress was like firing a machine gun; it would eventually overheat. In the long run, it wouldn't necessarily benefit society.

Even though the new technology sounded good, there were potential security risks.

In fact, the first people to get hit were the Chinese local electric vehicle companies and other automobile manufacturers that were planning on entering the electric vehicle field. After the initial surprise, everything returned to normal.

The terms were unfair, but they had no choice.

In fact, this did not directly interfere with their vested interests.

Compared with lithium-sulfur batteries, lithium-air batteries only required an air intake grille, which could easily be done. By making some slight changes, the vehicle range could be increased by 1.5 times, which would give customers another reason to choose electric vehicles instead of gasoline vehicles.

While the cost and risk of upgrading the technology could be passed onto upstream battery companies...

This was something the battery manufacturers and charging station companies should worry about, why should the car manufacturers worry about this?

Some companies such as Toyota, Ford, and Volkswagen expressed their concerns about adopting the Chinese standard, whereas others accepted the new standard quietly.

The only one that was pissed off was EVgo, who was also in the charging station business.

They just signed a cooperation agreement with Volkswagen, Mercedes, and other well-known car manufacturers. But now, their plan was going to fail.

Even if they wanted to upgrade their charging stations, it would be too late.

Not only did they already install a billion USD worth of charging stations in Shanghai, but if they wanted to adopt the new wireless charging standards of Star Sky Technology, they would have to pay Star Sky Technology a hefty patent fee...

This meant that they would have to do a ton of research and development from scratch and waste billions of dollars of money...

The United States authorities noticed Tesla's grievance.

Immediately after the Tesla press conference, the United States Department of Commerce held a meeting and answered reporters' questions.

"Bundling two unrelated patents together is not healthy to the industry, we will keep a close eye on this matter."

There was a hint of caution in their message.

People noticed that the political development of this was going to get interesting...

Chapter 983 This Is a Story

the news that lithium-air batteries and wireless charging technology were bundled together caused a storm.

especially after the us department of commerce speech, the news began to spread like wildfire.

the global energy stock market was going through a volatile time. everyone was waiting for star sky technology to respond, and they were also waiting for the us department of commerce to act on their "warning".

however, it was almost like star sky technology was oblivious to what was going on around them because they soon released their "sh standard" according to plan.

the s stood for star sky technology, while the h stood for huawei, the owners of hisilicon.

just like the name implied, star sky technology would be the ones setting the standard, while huawei would be the ones making the receiving and transmitting chipsets.

even though these two companies weren't directly in the charging station and electric vehicle industry, they were able to completely monopolize the charging station industry.

it was obvious that star sky technology's practices caused an uproar in the international field, and many domestic people even began whispering about

star sky technology's unhealthy business practices and comparing them to qualcomm.

lu zhou happened to hear about these rumors on weibo, but he didn't think there was anything wrong with what chen yushan was doing.

this was nothing more than capitalism.

survival of the fittest.

if they didn't take the initiative, tesla and other traditional automobile manufacturers would have reached a cooperation agreement, thus pushing out the beep beep charging and other chinese companies...

the second weekend in may.

inside the space shuttle assembly center, eight large mechanical arms unloaded a pile of circular equipment from a logistics vehicle. by using precise positional cameras, all of the equipment was unpacked in a spacecraft special container.

this was the ilhcrc cargo, and it would be sent to the moon in three days.

a month ago, the lunar tunnel boring machine, which was jointly produced by china railway group and china aerospace science and industry corporation, was sent to the moon palace via the magpie bridge. this equipment was deployed on the lunar hadron collider site.

after a month of construction, with the help of lunar construction personnel, this tunnel boring machine had successfully bored through a collider pipeline, lining the pipeline with titanium alloy material.

after the new supplies arrived at the surface of the moon, the first stage of the ilhcrc would be complete.

even though this track was only a hundred meters long, they were making progress one step at a time...

lu zhou was standing beside the space shuttle assembly center console. he looked at the mechanical arms and couldn't help but exclaim, "this quantum computer is amazing!"

ever since the assembly center autonomy system was connected to the jinling institute for advanced study server, the quantum computer had fully taken over the automation calculation of the space shuttle assembly center.

in fact, they didn't need anyone inside the assembly center. other than handling new deliveries, everything else was done by automated machines.

a string of text appeared on the console in front of lu zhou.

xiao ai: [master, a quantum computer is useless without an artificial intelligence operator. (´_ゝ｀)]

lu zhou said, "okay, you're amazing as well."

xiao ai: [haha, thank you, master.]

lu zhou looked at xiao ai and sighed.

this silly thing.

it's still far from having a normal iq.

the string of bubbles disappeared.

lu zhou guessed that xiao ai saw someone in the security cameras, so he turned around. he saw an acquaintance walking through the factory door.

"director li?" lu zhou smiled at the old man and said, "what brings you here?"

director li: "i heard the first batch of ilhcrc piping equipment is complete. i can't just leave you alone like this, so i came for a visit."

"just to ask about the ilhcrc? i don't buy it."

"ah, you got me." director li smiled and put on a serious face. "i didn't come here for the collider, i just wanted to ask, what is going on with you?"

lu zhou: "about what?"

"don't play dumb. about the patents, the sh standard. it looks like the united states department of commerce has its eyes on you."

lu zhou shrugged and said, “people are angry for no reason. we’re just thinking of the consumer’s perspective, that’s why we bundled wireless charging and lithium-air batteries together.”

director li frowned and said, “i’m actually curious, why did you bundle the two patents together? what’s wrong with putting them separately?”

lu zhou casually spoke.

“whether it’s beep beep charging or someone else, the new generation of wireless charging technology uses cp7724 chips designed by hisilicon. this system is completely different from the prevailing standards such as qi and a4wp.

“however, regardless of what our new system does, there is a fatal weakness, which is that it’s difficult to promote. it doesn’t matter if the technology itself is good, just like how inpopi technology is superior to qi technology. at the end of the day, inpopi still lost to the qi market standard. this is only because apple chose qi, do you get what i’m saying?”

when a new technology wasn’t revolutionary, the market would often take a long time to adjust and accept the new technology.

the emergence of inpopi technology undoubtedly threatened the qi wireless charging standard, but they were isolated by the downstream manufacturers of the industrial chain.

the end result was obvious. even though they had low electromagnetic radiation and high power conversion efficiency, they still lost to qi.

after hearing lu zhou’s words, director li nodded thoughtfully.

“i understand what you mean... you guys are planning to use lithium-air batteries to force others to accept your standards.”

“we’re not forcing anyone to use lithium-air batteries.” lu zhou laughed and said, “also, why should we adhere to other people’s standards, we can walk our own path...”

lu zhou didn’t think of these words on his own; he didn’t really care about business matters.

however, chen yushan often used this kind of business talk with him, so he borrowed these words from her.

“i didn’t think you had the foresight to consider this...” director li nodded and said, “but tesla and the americans are not going to give up.”

“i’m not worried about tesla.” lu zhou said, “honestly, tesla is the least of my worries, there are others who we have offended a lot more than tesla.”

director li frowned and said, “who did you piss off?”

“exxonmobil.”

lu zhou had a nostalgic look in his eyes.

this would be the perfect time to smoke a cigarette, but lu zhou couldn’t stand the hot air suffocating his lungs.

“thank god i’m back in china. if i were still in princeton, you would have to find me six feet under the ground.”

“exxonmobil is an oil company, right?” director li said, “how did you offend them?”

director li wasn’t worried about exxonmobil; after all, they were on chinese soil, and exxonmobil had no power here.

but what he didn’t understand, was what star sky technology had to do with an oil company?

even though the electric vehicle sector impacted the oil giants, this was nothing in comparison to the rise of nuclear fusion energy, and it wasn’t like the oil prices were dropping significantly...

“it’s not oil, they also do chemicals. it’s a long story.”

director li said, “then tell me, we have time.”

“then we’ll have to go back to six years ago... or five years ago.” lu zhou looked at the mechanical robot arm and said, “this is a story about a whistleblower...”

Chapter 984 I Want to See the President!

the story between exxonmobil and lu zhou happened a long time ago.

in fact, if it weren't for lu zhou's new thesis, this whole debacle would have been over.

however, it turned out that lu zhou's thesis was the key to a trillion-dollar market...

the other side of the pacific ocean.

a room inside the white house.

woods walked into the office and slammed his hands on the table. he spoke to the chief of staff of the white house, kevin.

"i want to see the president!"

kevin put down his pen and sighed.

"the president is not in the white house, so i'm afraid he can't see you. neither can i. i'll pass on your request to the president."

exxonmobil was one of the supporters for their parties, so they had to listen to their request to some extent...

woods looked at the chief of staff and spoke.

"listen, the lithium-air battery patent originally belonged to us. they used subterfuge to steal it! china is committing commercial fraud!"

even though kevin had been in the political field for many years, he still couldn't help but frown.

commercial fraud...

the patent transfer is clearly written. did you sign the contract under duress?

"what do you want me to do? convince the president to change the law?"

woods opened his mouth and nothing came out.

honestly, he didn't know what to do either.

before coming here, exxonmobil salesmen went to star sky technology several times, trying to buy the patent off star sky technology for ten times the price they sold it for. however, they weren't able to buy back the caged carbon molecules patent...

kevin sighed and said, "maybe you should think this through before coming here again."

woods sighed and continued to stare at the president's chief of staff. he took a deep breath and spoke.

"listen, we both know how important lithium-air batteries are. we've already fallen behind china because of lithium-sulfur batteries. if we let them master lithium-air batteries, we'll fall even more behind. do you know what i mean?

"the patent might only last for 20 years, but they'll be constantly sucking the blood out of us like mosquitoes. we will always be behind by 20 years! this is just like the semiconductor industry!

"we have to do something!"

kevin frowned.

in his opinion, the exxonmobil ceo was only venting his frustration at the chinese companies, but something caught his attention.

it wasn't in america's interest for china to continue leading the alternative energy industry.

especially since china already had control of nuclear fusion...

while kevin was thinking about how to report this to the president, the office door opened.

a man in a plaid shirt walked in and spoke.

"i want to see the president!"

kevin looked at elon, who was standing at the door.

“you sound just like someone that came into my office half an hour ago... do you want to discuss this in private?”

elon stared at woods and tried to remember who this person was. he took a deep breath and looked at kevin.

“listen, i don’t care what this gentleman said, i have something very important, let me—”

kevin: “let me guess, does it have to do with the alternative energy industry?”

elon paused for a second and snapped his fingers.

“that’s right! lithium-air batteries! you must know what these chinese people are doing! they’re bundling lithium-air batteries and wireless charging together, forcing us to adhere to their standards, this is...”

elon struggled for a while before speaking with emotion.

“it’s like we’re forced to eat their sh*t!”

“pfft!”

woods nearly laughed out loud.

it wasn’t until the other two people stared at him did he cough and put on a more serious expression.

“i apologize... i sympathize with your experience.”

elon opened his mouth and wanted to speak.

however, kevin stood up from his chair.

“okay, gentlemen, today’s meeting will have to end here. i have a very important conference to go to; i can’t sit here and listen to you two forever.”

he paused for a few seconds and spoke.

“i know what you guys want. star sky technology is a threat, am i right?”

elon and woods replied.

“that’s right, they’re a tumor!”

“yeah, they’re shameless thieves!”

“okay, gentlemen, the white house will take this matter seriously.” kevin nodded and said, “i’ll ask the department of commerce to investigate the patent acquisition that happened six years ago, as well as the improper use of the patent in the sh standard.”

elon finally sighed with relief.

even though this wasn’t exactly what he wanted, he was satisfied.

as long as the department of commerce could try to destroy this monopoly, most of his problems would be solved.

after all, the department of commerce was no joke.

once they set their eyes on someone, they would get to the bottom of it...

elon had no doubt about that.

...

the meeting was over.

woods walked out of the white house and got into a black limousine.

sitting across from him was another man in a suit.

“how did it go?”

woods wasn’t as aggressive as how he was in the white house. instead, he spoke in a formal tone, as if he was scared of this man.

“the white house recognizes the seriousness of the problem, and they plan on launching an antitrust investigation on star sky technology. i just met elon... did you ask him to come?”

“nope.” lawrence nodded toward the driver and turned his head back to the ceo. he then said, “i didn’t tell him to do anything, but he obviously made the right choice.”

woods frowned and said, “you’re that confident in tesla’s charging station market in china? even though the chinese market is huge, this is related to national security... if they’re willing to privatize the charging station market, they might not allow a foreign company to control shanghai’s power industry.”

“mr. woods, let me ask you something.” lawrence smiled and said, “if the white house changes the president every four years, how are we supposed to ensure that every president is the best candidate?”

woods frowned.

“we have to investigate the voter support rates of each state, and use—”

“it’s not that complicated.”

lawrence shook his head and smiled at the ceo of exxonmobil.

“we just have to be on both sides.”

Chapter 985 They Are Dead!

the third week of may.

while the alternative energy industry was going through a thunderstorm, a message from the us department of commerce added oil to the fire.

a spokesperson from the department of commerce spoke toward a row of cameras at a press conference.

“after a week-long investigation, we have conducted forensics on 16 alternative energy companies around the world and have consulted industry leaders.

“we have enough evidence to suspect that star sky technology is conducting monopolistic behavior.

“in addition, we have noticed that the charging station subsidiary of star sky technology has adopted malicious business methods when competing with tesla’s charging station business in the yangtze river delta city group area. they have set up exclusive thresholds that violate free trades and hinder the development of the industry.

“because of this, we will bring a lawsuit on the legality of the sh standard.

“considering the fact that the sh standard is one of the pieces of evidence that star sky technology is interfering with the free market, this case will be conducted in conjunction with an antitrust investigation!”

the press conference was in an uproar.

the reporters at the scene rushed forward, like sharks that smelled blood. they desperately took photos, capturing every expression of the spokesperson.

the sh standard is illegal!

the us department of commerce is going to launch an antitrust investigation against star sky technology!

as expected, the development of china’s new energy industry finally alerted the united states.

both the white house and the united states congress could no longer turn a blind eye to this.

it was foreseeable that the entire energy industry would go through a drastic change, due to the actions of the department of commerce!

the reporters at the scene could already imagine the newspaper headlines.

the newspapers would be talking about this for the next month!

shortly after the department of commerce press conference, the content of the press conference was released online.

discussions began to explode on social networks such as facebook.

in the blink of an eye, whether it was academia or industry, whether it was wall street, investment banks, or blue-collar workers, everyone was talking about this.

[i think it’s about time the white house makes a move!]

[those people are erroneously using legal loopholes to achieve their motives! they are destroying capitalism!]

[i think the qi standard is good, it should be compatible with electric vehicles, so why should i use the sh standard? can't the chinese just do things our way?]

[f*ck, why do we have to use your standards! why don't you get a lithium-air battery patent then!]

[don't forget, the lithium-air battery patents actually belong to exxonmobil.]

[nonsense! i heard the mathematical model used by professor stanley was stolen from professor lu.]

[that's ridiculous, it sounds like you're in academia as well, do you really believe that?]

it seemed like there were two sides to the debates; one side believed the us department of commerce, while the other side believed that the act of suppressing high-tech enterprises in other countries was worse than setting up patent barriers.

simply put, patent barriers were a common thing; any companies dedicated to research and development would do everything they could to protect their intellectual property rights.

after all, if they couldn't own their technology, why would anyone conduct risky and costly research and development?

therefore, it was unreasonable to interfere with star sky technology's rights to exercise their patents, on the grounds of affecting industry development.

however, when one enterprise had the strength to influence a country, they were no longer just an enterprise.

in some sense, it was only a matter of time before the united states took action on star sky technology.

even if the sh standard didn't happen, someone else in the future would have triggered this investigation.

the americans would never allow another company like qualcomm to exist; a company that used their patents to monopolize the entire industry.

putting it bluntly, a third world country like china trying to overtake america in terms of science and technology was a sin in their eyes...

because of this, there were also people on the neutral side of all this.

the sh standard was just a market move with no political purpose. but the us department of commerce investigation would raise the tensions between the two countries...

from the perspective of the americans, this was not a good thing.

in fact, this was what people were worried about.

once a conflict began, it would take a war for it to stop.

the day after the department of commerce press conference, the justice department also expressed that after reviewing the patent acquisition case from six years ago, the company that bought the patents from exxonmobil, which was a shell company of star sky technology, used questionable business tactics.

also, the acquisition itself was suspected of contract fraud!

the former exxonmobil employee that signed the patent transfer admitted that he received a us\$500,000 "bribe" from star sky technology.

if this allegation turned out to be true, the patent acquisition from six years ago could be labeled illegal.

and it might be possible for exxonmobil to retrieve caged carbon molecules patent...

without having to pay money...

...

exxonmobil office.

professor stanley pushed the door open and walked in. he stared at woods like he was a monster.

“are you crazy? you know we stole—secretly borrowed the data from them. i don’t know why the chinese didn’t chase after us, but we’re the ones that stole that patent!”

“i think a scholar like you should just stay in the laboratory.” woods smiled and said, “regardless of how we obtained the data, the court is all about evidence. do you know what i mean, professor stanley?”

woods obviously didn’t care.

the only thing he cared about was a success.

however, unlike him, professor stanley was a scholar, not a businessman.

he wasn’t willing to do anything shameless and disgraceful!

“there is evidence!”

professor stanley said to woods, “you don’t get it! people in academia have been talking about the mathematical model used in the caged carbon molecules, and the data processing was almost exactly the same as the 2018 nobel prize results! some people even said that my name should be on the nobel prize!”

woods: “isn’t that a good thing?”

“not good at all!” professor stanley said angrily, “this thing was almost over, but because of the patent, people are digging up this story again!”

woods frowned and spoke casually.

“i don’t know a lot about academia, but you’re not guilty, right? people suspect you are, but they don’t have any evidence.”

“i just want to tell you that, if they bring this to court, you won’t be able to win over the jury!”

“this is a lawsuit, there won’t be a jury.” woods smiled and looked at stanley as he said, “don’t worry, my friend... also, do you want to work here again? don’t tell me you came all the way to talk about this boring stuff.”

"i'm too stupid! i shouldn't have come here, you don't understand what i'm talking about!" stanley continued, "you're going further and further down the wrong path, you're the one being ignorant."

"you're overcomplicating things." woods shrugged and said, "do you really think we're going to play a fair game with them? this is the white house, no one on this planet can go against them."

woods smiled at professor stanley.

"it doesn't matter if the patent belongs to them.

"just know that they are screwed!"

Chapter 986 Rules Are Made for Winning

first was the us department of commerce investigation, then was the department of justice; they were all going after star sky technology.

if a conviction was formed, star sky technology might have to pay a 10 figure fine for the sh standard and lithium-air battery patent bundling agreement.

the united states seemed to have set its eyes on attacking this high-tech chinese company.

the day after the department of justice report came out, the news of the antitrust investigation spread throughout china.

soon after, heated discussions began to spread.

[f*ck sake, do the americans want to destroy star sky technology?]

[this is ridiculous! we bought it when it was worthless, now we find out it's valuable, and they're trying to say the sale wasn't legal?]

[it looks like star sky technology is being too flamboyant, they should have been more low-key! if they didn't have their sh standard, this wouldn't have happened!]

[go f*ck yourself! we developed the technology ourselves, why can't we use our own standards? also, the sh standard charging station is only in shanghai? why does the us have authority here?]

[...]

compared to the discussion on facebook, the weibo discussions were undoubtedly more intense. there were a lot more curse words being thrown around.

people with ulterior motives also joined in on the discussion.

for example, a well-known expert in the financial industry wrote a post around "procedural justice" and "game theory", tackling the problem of how "star sky technology should treat sanctions by the department of commerce".

[actually, this is a problem of chinese companies unable to adjust to the international market.

[there are many companies with excellent research and development capabilities in our country, but what advanced science and technology needs is good management. even though many companies have achieved success, they aren't able to penetrate the international market. [they think that they can do whatever they want, just like what they do in china. that idea is naive and ignorant.

[in fact, the united states isn't worried about being surpassed by china. it's quite the contrary. the rise of china's economy is in line with the interest of the united states. however, chinese companies are not aware of this. if you follow the rules of the game, they will admit defeat and praise you. however, if you don't follow the rules, don't complain when they give you a lesson!]

after this article came out, it immediately spread to other social media platforms.

some people scolded the article, while others were persuaded.

regardless of public perception, the author had successfully achieved their goal.

the author's view count exploded...

...

"i saw it, it looks like we're going through an antitrust investigation."

lu zhou sat in his jinling institute for advanced study office. he was talking with chen yushan on the phone.

because the college entrance examination was only a few days ago, lu zhou posted on weibo to his teenage fans, wishing them good luck in the exam.

however, most of his fans were talking about his company being sanctioned.

but because it was getting closer to june, lu zhou was spending most of his time on riemann's hypothesis. he didn't pay attention to star sky technology or beep beep charging.

if it weren't for people on weibo tagging him, he wouldn't have even known about the americans' plans.

chen yushan didn't seem to be worried.

"who cares if they're after you, i'll protect you."

lu zhou: "..."

"okay, okay, just kidding." chen yushan smiled and said in a serious manner, "has the state come to look for you? people from beijing?"

lu zhou thought for a second and said, "does the state administration for national defense count?"

director li would come to lu zhou's office every couple of days.

chen yushan smiled and said, "that's good, you can relax now."

lu zhou said, "that's it?"

chen yushan: "of course, competition between companies is just market behavior, so the country wouldn't intervene. whether it's in america or china.

"but this is clearly not the case now, because of the lithium-air battery and sh standard, we have clearly dominated the market. electric vehicle companies

and charging station companies only have two options, either adhere to our standards or give up on lithium-air batteries.

“obviously, from their perspective, it seems like they have a choice.”

they actually didn’t have a choice.

not adhering to the new standards meant they would be eliminated from the market.

unless the entire industry abandoned lithium-air batteries, consumers would naturally choose lithium-air batteries over lithium-sulfur batteries.

and obviously, the industry wouldn’t just abandon the superior lithium-air batteries.

chinese companies would gladly incorporate lithium-air batteries into their cars.

lu zhou nodded and said, “so, we’re about to win, but the americans are upset. they want to smash the chessboard, am i correct?”

chen yushan smiled and said, “bingo! you’re correct! rules are made for winning, rules are broken for winning too.”

“then what do you plan on doing?” lu zhou said. sitting in his chair with his phone pressed against his ear, he said curiously, “we’re just a company, we’re no match against an entire country.”

chen yushan: “that’s right, but the second the department of justice and department of commerce smashed the chessboard, the chess players have changed.

“some departments might pretend to turn a blind eye, but seeing how director li came all the way to jinling, it looks like beijing is taking this seriously.”

chen yushan smirked and said, “this isn’t about business competition anymore, this is about politics.”

lu zhou nodded.

“i see, no wonder you said the chess game is over, and the show is about to begin.”

“yeah, our job is over, we just have to wait now.” chen yushan sighed and said emotionally, “a few years ago, i would have never adopted such a radical strategy, but now, we can.”

in fact, when the lithium-sulfur batteries came out, star sky technology had the option to do something similar to this.

because of the reliability and durability of lithium-sulfur batteries compared to traditional lithium-ion batteries, they had the chance of making companies like apple and samsung adhere to their standards.

as long as they cooperated with huawei or xiaomi, they had the chance to dominate the market.

however, that was just in theory; if they really did that, it would be suicide.

just by monopolizing the electric vehicle industry alone, they were able to attract the attention of the white house.

if they tried to do the same on mobile phones and other electronic equipment, the united states would have taken a more drastic approach...

even huawei and xiaomi wouldn't have done such a thing; they would have stayed far away from star sky technology.

“weak countries don't have diplomacy, strong nations have everything. just like how manhattan controls the world's wealth. is it because of their trading technology? maybe, but that's not the essence of it.

“our situation is similar. business operation is important, but the reason we're winning is not because of our strategy.”

lu zhou curiously asked, “then what is it?”

chen yushan: “it's because of you.”

“... me?”

“yeah...” chen yushan smiled and said, “we already won, ever since the light that illuminated haizhou three years ago.

“just wait and see. even if we're going against exxonmobil and tesla, or even the white house, we will be victorious!”

Chapter 987 It's Begun!

on the last thursday in may, the sky above manhattan was covered in a layer of clouds, as if it was about to rain.

in order to avoid the rain, ben subconsciously began walking faster.

this was wall street. if the global financial markets were a human brain, this was the prefrontal cortex.

ben was a gifted person who graduated from harvard. he was a successful investment banker working for goldman sachs...

he went into the building, up the elevator, and walked into his office with his briefcase.

his colleague was already in his office, waiting for him. his colleague asked, "did you watch the morning news?"

ben: "not yet, did something happen?"

carell: "no, nothing happened, which is weird. you should know that our department of justice announced that they have collected enough evidence to prove that the acquisition from six years ago was illegal. i've been paying attention to the news about star sky technology and china. but i haven't been able to see anything."

ben placed his briefcase on his desk and sat down.

he opened his computer and shook his head.

"this is unusual, i think this is getting more serious. i can't think of a reason why china would choose to back down. i've always said that it is a bad idea to conduct an antitrust investigation on star sky technology. now the white house plans on using the department of justice to undo a patent acquisition that happened six years ago! this is asinine! they're too naive!"

if this were five years ago, this would have been completely different.

back then, they could have stepped on star sky technology like an ant.

but with the current international situation, things were different.

especially because of the failure of the ares program, as well as the unveiling of the ilhcrc, more and more countries had begun to recognize that china had gradually become the new super-country of the world.

the white house should have realized that the cross-regional nuclear fusion power grid spreading across southeast asia had completely eliminated america's influence in the region.

due to factors such as the successful mars rescue, china had won over the international community, and more and more small countries had opened their doors to the cross-regional power grid and the economic growth that came with it.

therefore, trying to attack a chinese enterprise was not a good idea.

of course...

the white house might have had no other choice.

but that was not something ben cared about.

carell twisted the pen in his hand and spoke.

"that's something the politicians have to worry about. this is happening, and it is not going to stop. i just want to know what china's countermeasures are?"

he paused for a second and shrugged before saying, "this concerns our operational strategies, as well as whether or not we can have a relaxing weekend."

"it is very difficult to predict china's moves since they're dominating us in at least two industries. in theory, they have at least two options." ben thought for a second and said, "but i prefer that they give the white house a buffer time and introduce countermeasures next monday..."

"which field do you think they're going to act on?"

"i don't know, anything is possible. but i think we should take back our positions and withdraw some funds to balance our risk. especially in west cost public utility companies and power companies that we have positions in... as

well as exxonmobil and tesla. but i don't think we're long them right now, so we should be fine."

carell snapped his fingers.

"good idea, i was thinking the same thing."

ben wondered if carell really thought of the same idea.

however, ben didn't really care.

the morning markets stayed relatively calm. just like the dark clouds outside the window, the calmness made people a little uncomfortable.

ben was eating his sandwich as he stared at the news page on his computer screen and took a sip of coffee.

"carell."

"what's up, my friend?"

"don't you think the morning markets are too stable?"

"you're saying this is the calm before the storm?"

"i think so." ben looked out the window and said, "we all know it's going to come sooner or later."

carell said, "speaking of which, today is thursday."

ben looked at his colleague and asked, "yeah, why?"

"there's a new movie coming out today."

ben: "..."

i'm talking about the markets, and you're thinking about f*cking movies?

the news continued to play on the computer screen.

after the news segment on a brazilian iron ore company increasing their production, the news anchor began to talk about umicore investing €1 billion into southeast asia, to fill the demand gap for lithium anode materials.

ben, who turned his attention back onto the computer, noticed something strange.

which was that, half of the news was related to china.

even if it wasn't directly related, it was at least partially related.

for example, the brazilian iron ore company announced an increase in production because of the booming infrastructure market in southeast asian driving up iron ore prices. according to their analysts, the cross-regional power grids played an extremely important role...

as for why there was such a huge demand gap for lithium anode materials, it was obviously because of the lithium-air batteries. some people were even researching how to create a futures market for the pdms anode material.

while he was thinking about whether or not the news would affect his investments, the news anchor suddenly received a piece of paper off camera.

when the news anchor read the note, his expression changed instantly.

even ben could see that the news anchor was shocked.

this kind of thing happened from time to time on news networks.

usually, this meant there was a breaking piece of news.

ben was carefully listening to the news when the words of the news anchor nearly made him fall out of his chair.

"we have breaking news..."

"according to our reporters in china, an hour ago, the chinese ministry of environmental protection began an investigation into east asia energy's nuclear core project in california. according to reliable sources, the project will be suspended for at least a month."

"sh*t."

ben stared at the computer screen as a flash of panic appeared in his eyes, and a drop of sweat slipped from his forehead.

he was too ignorant.

he had underestimated china's determination.

china's counterattack was inevitable; even a homeless guy on the street could have predicted that.

he just didn't expect everything to happen so suddenly...

a storm was brewing.

Chapter 988 Black Thursday!

"our company is promoting wireless charging stations in the shanghai market to meet the needs of the people in the yangtze river delta city group area...

"for the international markets, the chinese side encourages chinese companies to abide by local laws and regulations, to be an enterprise with a sense of international responsibility, that meets the expectations of the local community.

"our company is doing honest work, and we do not have ulterior motives.

"we will pay close attention to the progress and take necessary measures."

the camera lights flashed at the press conference.

the spokesperson for the chinese ministry of commerce spoke to a crowd of domestic and foreign reporters.

their announcement was a declaration of war, a warning for a counterattack.

in fact, the counterattack had already begun before the press conference.

first was east asia energy, the fusion energy giant. they cooperated with the ministry of environmental protection and began to investigate their oversea orders and suspended the california nuclear core project indefinitely.

that wasn't it.

just like the us department of commerce's antitrust investigation on star sky technology, this was just the beginning.

as the largest superconducting material company in the world, baosheng group, who worked with star sky technology on the sg-1 superconducting material, which provided the superconducting magnet for the haizhou experimental reactor, announced a suspension of north american orders.

baosheng group was a partly state-owned company, thus its performance wasn't entirely based on profits alone.

when it came to the fusion power plant in california, as well as those companies that were closely tied to the fusion power plant, this was even worse than the suspension of the nuclear core project.

there was only one reason.

they wouldn't receive the nuclear core until next year. even though there were some road bumps in the way, they had an entire year to repair their relationship with china.

but the sg-1 material was different.

this stuff was a key material for the construction of superconducting magnets, which was used to restrain the ferrofluid. without the sg-1 material, they had to pause construction on the whole project.

energy and public utility companies had spent loads of money on this fusion power plant, and for every day the project was delayed, it meant millions of dollars in losses.

then there was aerospace.

the chinese courts accepted a claim submitted by the china aerospace science and industry corporation, which named two us lunar gateway construction units of intellectual property infringement.

logically speaking, china didn't have the right to interfere with america's lunar project, nor did it do so.

more than 90% of the lunar transfer orbit transportations were done by the magpie bridge of star sky technology.

star sky technology complied with the relevant departments and suspended cooperation with companies on the space launch mission.

instantly, the lunar gateway project was suspended!

unfortunately, nasa was hit the hardest by the collateral damage.

in order not to delay the construction, director carson had to urgently contact the houston space launch center and take out the bfr rocket, which was originally going to be used for the follow-up project of the arens program.

the bfr project had more than enough room to carry a batch of supplies to the lunar transfer orbit.

however, the launch costs would increase by an order of magnitude. director carson almost wanted to cry.

china's countermeasures went from controllable fusion to aerospace.

interestingly enough, almost all of the countermeasures had one thing in common, which was that they were more or less related to star sky technology or professor lu...

wall street didn't expect this sudden attack.

no one doubted that china would respond, but they didn't expect it to come this strong and suddenly!

two days ago, investment banks were analyzing china's operational strategies.

they planned on reducing their positions, and if china didn't respond, they even planned on going long on exxonmobil or tesla.

however, there was no doubt that right now, everyone on wall street was shorting the market.

nyse was in chaos.

"jesus! they can't just do this!"

"suspending orders for environmental reasons! do these people think we're idiots? can't they abide by the contract?"

"these neanderthals! completely ruthless!"

the aerospace sector had plummeted across the board!

the energy sector was in shambles!

the companies that had doubled in market value due to the california fusion power plant project, had tumbled overnight.

the wall street journal wrote in their latest issue that china shouldn't retaliate in unrelated areas such as aerospace and that it would only escalate the situation.

after the article came out, it was retweeted by countless americans.

all of the major american media outlets were reporting on this matter. even the white house was forced to send out a spokesperson, asking the chinese side to remain calm.

however, the chinese side obviously didn't buy it.

the bloodbath in the financial markets was just the beginning.

on the friday after black thursday, a riot was brewing on the streets of california.

when they heard that they had wasted tens of billions into the fusion power station because of some idiot in the white house, california went crazy...

Chapter 989 Give Up

screwed.

it was totally screwed.

even though the president had expected the counterattack by the chinese side, and his advisory team also formulated a response plan, they didn't expect the chinese to act so quickly!

even though there was no substantial loss on the surface, wall street was already being hit hard.

even though there weren't any actualized losses, it was enough to give them a headache.

of course, this wasn't the worst.

only now did the president realize the level of penetration the chinese high-tech companies had in all of their industries.

two national projects worth more than us\$10 billion were instantly demolished in an instant...

this was terrifying!

the office door opened, and kevin walked in with a serious look on his face.

"i just called the california government just now. local environmental organizations and other organizations are protesting. they want clean and cheap energy... they want us to receive the nuclear core from china this year."

"f*ck them!"

the president slammed his fist on the table. he could feel his throat suffocating with anger.

he took a deep breath and calmed down, and after contemplating it for a while, he spoke in a gentle tone.

"maybe we should restart the national ignition facility... maybe controllable fusion is not as difficult as we thought..."

restart the national ignition facility...

kevin had a bitter look on his face.

he knew that the president himself knew how unrealistic that plan was. not only did this mean they would have to hire tens of thousands of scholars, but they would also have to spend tens of billions. this meant opening a third battlefield on top of the two original super projects.

even america couldn't handle three super projects at the same time; the huge financial pressure could bankrupt the federal government.

not to mention, even if they restarted the national ignition facility...

kevin: "what about the sg-1 material? without that, we can't complete the magnets we need to confine the plasma, unless we can think of another way to optimize the plasma turbulence control scheme. i've consulted with the experts. not only do we need the nuclear core, but we also need a supply of sg-1 material."

president: "chips! restrict the exportation of chips to china! two can play this game."

kevin took a deep breath.

"sir."

the president stared at him.

"what's wrong?"

kevin: "we can do that, but are you sure?"

the questioning tone from the chief of staff made the president rethink his words.

"i'll think about it..."

chips...

that was a good idea.

there were more chips being imported into china than gallons of oil.

however, this would be a blow to both sides. after all, china could source their chips from other countries.

even though america could also convince their allies to suspend chip exportation to chinese companies...

but...

would their european allies cooperate, when faced with the temptation of controllable fusion?

europe was like a retired wealthy man, relying on the retirement fund he saved when he was young. he could still survive for a few decades, but they needed a controllable fusion to survive.

so far, china hadn't released the official documents, so going against china meant they could say goodbye to nuclear fusion...

even if america bet all of their chips...

did they really have a chance of winning?

the president couldn't help but feel a touch of sadness.

ten years ago was different.

no, even two years ago, the situation was much better than now.

at least back then, they had the ability to compete with china, and their international influence allowed them to kick china out of iter.

but now, they couldn't even take down one chinese company...

kevin paused for a second and spoke.

"sir, we've done enough, think about the long term impacts. this is not the right time to attack chinese high-tech enterprises. our super projects still need their support. before the fusion power plant is built, before the lunar gateway program finishes, we should restrain ourselves.

"also, the electric vehicle market is not our concern. our demand for electric vehicles is not as high as china's, and tesla's market value is not comparable to california's economy. what if we just tell elon to make a sacrifice?"

after all, elon was the one that moved all of the jobs to shanghai.

even though there was nothing wrong with earning money from the chinese, elon was taking away the jobs from americans.

"what about exxonmobil?" the president paused for a second and said, "wall street is dangerous, but these oil giants are not."

the president never paid attention to tesla's interests.

the reason for the attack against star sky technology was because this company had been on his radar for a long time; he only used the sh standard as an excuse.

however, exxonmobil was different. exxonmobil wasn't just a political campaign funder; it also indirectly provided hundreds of thousands of jobs.

basically, exxonmobil could easily affect unemployment rates.

and unemployment rates played a huge deal on the elections...

"they're just taking advantage of the situation and trying to make a profit, but they don't matter, plus the ceo of exxonmobil has to show his board that he's not useless, the useless person is..."

kevin awkwardly paused for a second and thought of a safe answer. "the useless person is the judge."

the president said, "isn't it a bit shameless for us to give in like this?"

kevin sighed and smiled as he said, "it's easy to find an excuse. the investigation from the department of commerce can be canceled by the international trade commission. we're not compromising, we just... made an error!

"as for the department of justice, make their evidence 'incomplete'. if exxonmobil isn't happy, we can tell them to bring the lawsuit themselves."

the president's eyes suddenly lit up. he looked at his chief of staff and said, "contact the people from the international trade commission.

"you're right, this is not a good time to attack high-tech chinese companies, we'll go with your plan!"

Chapter 990 Dismissal

there were two famous streets in america.

one was wall street, in manhattan, new york, the other was k street, in washington, dc.

because of the number of lobbying organizations and think tanks that had their headquarters here, k street was often referred to as “lobbying street”, or even the “fourth us government department”.

lawrence was sitting in an office on the corner of k street. he nodded with his phone in his hand.

“did the president say that?”

“okay, i understand.”

lawrence hung up the phone and gave his phone to his assistant, who was standing next to him.

woods was sitting across from him. he frowned and asked curiously, “can i ask a question?”

“go ahead.”

“you were on the phone with...”

“chief of staff.”

chief of staff!

woods had a look of surprise on his face.

having a phone call with the chief of staff wasn’t anything extraordinary, exxonmobil also had this power, but having the chief of staff personally report to him...

woods couldn’t help but gulp.

no wonder these blood-sucking vampires can always make the right choice, they have their own exclusive information channel.

he thought back to the black thursday financial markets crisis and wondered how much money this guy made from shorting the market...

“what did the white house decide on?”

lawrence carelessly smiled and replied, “they plan on reconsidering the anti-monopoly investigation on star sky technology since now is not the time to provoke conflict.”

woods paused for a second as his heart skipped a beat.

“but the patent—”

“that didn’t belong to you in the first place, forget about it.”

lawrence smiled at this texas ceo. he was clearly looking down on him.

instead of lobbying the white house, pressuring the department of justice, and bribing witnesses... these barbarians were more inclined to steal wealth off others.

this was like horse racing.

the real winner wasn’t the horse that crossed the finish line, it was the bookmaker that won all the chips from having the edge.

“goddamn it!”

woods clenched his fist. he tried to maintain his demeanor as he breathed heavily out of his nose.

lawrence said, “now that you know what is going to happen, there’s no need for me to stay here. thanks for your hospitality, mr. woods.”

lawrence stood up from the couch and nodded toward his assistant, gesturing to him to fetch the car. he looked at woods and said, “we’re interested in the oil field in paraguay. our analysts have predicted that if every car on the planet is electric by 2040, the oil business will still be profitable, so i sincerely suggest you take a look at this project...”

woods looked like he had something to say. lawrence paused for a second and spoke with a smile.

“of course, you don’t have to mock me. princeton’s history classes didn’t teach me any investment skills, but thankfully, i learned about patience.”

woods stood up from the sofa and asked, “are you going to leave?”

“yeah.” lawrence nodded and said, “the flight is at 3 o’clock, so it’s time for me to go.”

“where are you going?”

“to see an old friend.”

lawrence smiled and spoke.

“haven’t seen him in a long time, but i heard he’s doing well.”

...

binghamton university.

laboratory of the department of chemistry.

professor stanley sat at his desk, flipping through newspapers. suddenly, it was like a stone was lifted off his chest, and his entire body relaxed.

his student, a phd student with glasses, happened to walk into the laboratory. he noticed the professor and asked, “what’s wrong, professor?”

“withdrawn.”

“withdrawn?”

“nothing, none of your business.” professor stanley stood up and adjusted his collar as he said, “which classroom is the afternoon class in?”

“building a, room 411... you plan on going yourself?”

the phd student had a look of surprise on his face.

the professor hated giving classes to undergraduate students, explaining elementary concepts from a textbook. most of the time, professor stanley made his students and assistants give the lectures; he would never personally give a lecture. he always said true science could only be discovered in a laboratory.

but now, stanley wanted to give a lecture...

pigs were starting to fly!

“going over rudimentary things can inspire new research... i forgot who said this, probably a famous guy.” professor stanley then said, “yeah, so, i’ll handle the class this afternoon, you can just help me sort through some papers.”

the phd student nodded.

“okay, professor, i’ll give you the powerpoint copy.”

professor stanley snorted and spoke.

“i don’t need that, a real teacher only needs a blackboard and a piece of chalk.”

student: “...”

without explaining anything, professor stanley happily picked up the lesson plan on the table and walked out of the door.

as the student watched the door close, he wondered what his boss was doing.

he noticed the newspaper on the table.

he walked up and quietly unfolded the newspaper, turning to the page professor stanley was reading.

“the largest intellectual property fraud case in history was withdrawn due to insufficient evidence...”

his eyes widened as he remembered that professor stanley once worked on a research project with exxonmobil.

exxonmobil choosing to withdraw the lawsuit was bad news, but the look of relief on his supervisor’s face...

suddenly, he thought of a rumor that was circulating in the academic community a while ago.

“maybe the paper from six years ago was really...”

the student realized he might have discovered an incredible secret. he quickly closed the newspaper and placed it back to its original spot.

all he wanted was to graduate.

he intended to keep this secret forever.

at least, until he graduated...

Chapter 991 Use Lithium-Air!

the third day after black thursday.

the rising sun illuminated manhattan island at six o'clock in the morning.

as usual, ben got off the car with a briefcase. he yawned and began to walk toward his office building when he saw a newspaper stand being surrounded by a crowd of people.

men in suits and leather shoes gathered around the stand, handing out cash in exchange for a copy.

"what happened..."

ben walked up and saw a fat man with curly hair walking out of the crowd.

this guy was none other than carell.

ben didn't hesitate before walking up and patting his colleague's shoulder.

"hey, what happened? why are there so many people around here?"

"i don't know, that's why i tried to buy a copy." carell unfolded the newspaper and looked down at the headline.

the second his eyes touched the newspaper, carell froze.

ben also froze.

"the department of commerce withdrew! so did exxonmobil! this is..." carell looked at ben and said, "ben, my friend, quick, think, what does this mean for us?"

ben grabbed his hair; his brain was racing a million miles an hour.

"i don't know... this is too sudden, maybe it's a good thing, maybe it's not... let me think, this is good for the fusion power plant in cali... f*ck! i thought this antitrust investigation would drag on for at least the end of the year! it's been less than a week and the idiots at congress already withdrew!"

"there's an email from the company."

"what did they say?" ben quickly asked.

"nothing, just telling us to arrive earlier, the manager wants to hold a short meeting..."

"quick! they're going to discuss this during the meeting!" ben said as he crammed the newspaper into his briefcase and ran into the office building.

carell put away his phone and screamed as he tried to catch up.

"hey! i bought that newspaper!"

what happened near the goldman sachs building wasn't an isolated incident.

in fact, almost all of the newspaper stands in manhattan were swamped by businessmen.

some people just wanted to know what was going on.

but most people were people working in investment banks.

the international trade commission dismissed the antitrust investigation!

exxonmobil gave up on their lawsuit!

these two news headlines appeared in the wall street journal.

apparently, the wall street journal editor took a long time to decide which news article to put as the front-page story.

however, it didn't matter.

because regardless of which story was on the front page, the newspaper was sold out like hotcakes.

people who were lucky enough to grab a copy couldn't believe their eyes. people were mentally preparing themselves, but they didn't expect this anti-monopoly investigation to stop so suddenly!

soon after, the news spread onto the internet.

these headlines spread throughout america at the speed of light, and investors were stunned by the news.

this was a huge blow to the conservatives that wanted to give the arrogant chinese a lesson.

facebook.

the comment section began to flood.

[this is our darkest time!]

[i'm so disappointed, i won't vote for this coward again.]

[this is the darkest time! this reminds me of chamberlain, who signed the peace treaty, thinking that it was going to avoid the war. then look at what happened!]

[stop talking out of your a*s!]

[do you know how many times america has protected the freedom of the world?]

[... you look like a quisling to me!]

...

tesla building in china.

the conference room on the top floor.

elon musk looked at the sun rising through the floor-to-ceiling windows. he had just gotten off a red-eye flight.

he suddenly sighed.

"i'm not blaming you, we all know that we didn't lose to star sky technology, nor did we lose to beep beep charging, we didn't even lose to china."

bobby didn't say anything.

he knew what his boss was thinking about.

bobby said, "actually, thinking about it carefully, we made the wrong decision. ever since they registered their patent for the lithium-air battery, we had no chance of winning. i would have done the same thing as them. even though i don't think wireless charging is game-changing technology, i would have used another tactic to allow us to become the standard setters."

a patent was only valid for 20 years.

but how long was a standard valid for?

no one knew because standards had inertia; it was difficult to replace and change.

elon sighed and spoke.

"i know, but... are you willing to accept defeat?"

bobby shook his head and replied, "no, but there's nothing we can do."

a while ago, the local shanghai government suddenly became unwelcoming and aggressive toward tesla.

this type of attitude change was abnormal, so bobby began thinking.

then, after bobby contacted an official from the local government, he learned that this was beijing's doings.

they crossed the line.

and before they uncrossed this line, the chinese wouldn't change their attitude.

bobby didn't know which line they crossed, perhaps it was something they did or something the white house did.

but he knew that tesla's future in china depended on them uncrossing this line...

however, he didn't have the power to make a decision.

only the man standing in front of him did.

after a while, bobby spoke to elon.

"what do we do now?"

"nothing..." elon looked at the sun rising and said nonchalantly, "damage control.

"charging station is a good industry. we can make a lot of money here, but it's not our core business model..."

"for now, we have to keep tesla alive in china."

bobby nodded and spoke.

"i understand, what about the new model? the 2022 model..."

"use lithium-air batteries," elon said with a look of pain. he clenched his jaws and said, "use their sh standard..."

sh standard...

i lost again...

ahhh!

i'm so f*cking pissed.

bobby had a sense of admiration in his heart.

maybe...

this is why elon is america's greatest entrepreneur...

Chapter 992 Becoming Famous!

the anti-monopoly investigation stirred up the international community, which was finally terminated by the international trade commission.

three of the six senate members appointed by the president voted yes, while two voted no and one abstained from voting.

after the thunderstorm on black friday, the war between the two countries in the fields of controllable fusion and aerospace gradually recovered, while the financial markets went back to its original track.

some people made a lot of money, some people lost everything.

regardless, everything was settled, and star sky technology was able to book a win.

the news of star sky technology's victory spread throughout the financial industry, along with a name.

this name wasn't lu zhou; everyone had already heard about lu zhou at this point.

it was...

the ceo of star sky technology—chen yushan.

as one of the top high-tech companies in china, most people in business knew of this female ceo.

most people knew her as the "wharton mba" and "lu zhou's classmate".

there were even rumors of her and academician lu being "together", and rarely did people talk about her business abilities.

the reason for this was normal.

the main business model of star sky technology was patent control, even the best business plan and strategies would be overshadowed by academician lu's research abilities.

just like how all of apple's success was attributed to steve jobs, and not tim cook.

the same worked for star sky technology.

people even criticized her, claiming that anyone in her position would be able to transform star sky technology into a fortune 500 company, that she was just a puppet for lu zhou.

however, this antitrust investigation undoubtedly proved those people wrong.

even though this was technically a war between the united states and china, not every ceo had the ability to handle the pressure from giants such as tesla and exxonmobil.

even tim cook himself might not have been able to do as good of a job as her.

it was obvious that star sky technology had a world-class ceo.

after this battle, no one had any doubts about "ceo chen's" ability. even though she was still far from being a legend such as jack welch or marc lore, she could easily be ranked in the top 50 in the world.

other than the news about chen yushan, the rest of the attention was placed on tesla.

after the us department of commerce terminated the antitrust investigation, tesla immediately issued an official announcement regarding their demerger with evgo.

this announcement caught the attention of the shanghai financial field.

due to the acquisition made by star sky technology, as well as the sh standard, many chinese investors had developed an interest in charging station companies.

however, tesla's decision to part ways with evgo made these investors doubt themselves. the investors wondered if there was something they didn't know.

however, even if they knew the whole picture, they wouldn't be able to do anything.

after all, it seemed like star sky technology was the only one that could succeed in the charging station field.

“evgo looks good, i think we should acquire them.”

chen yushan told lu zhou about tesla’s demerger with evgo.

lu zhou frowned and said, “is beep beep charging not enough?”

to be honest, he quite liked the name.

even though it sounded less futuristic than evgo, it was more catchy.

after hearing lu zhou’s words, chen yushan patiently explained.

“i didn’t say there’s anything wrong with beep beep charging, and acquiring evgo won’t affect beep beep charging. instead, it will help with the expansion. we can take over evgo’s shanghai coverage, as well as other resources. basically, if we don’t buy them, someone else will, which could mean trouble.

“also, even though the yangtze river delta city group is our focus, that doesn’t mean we should abandon the overseas markets. in terms of charging stations, evgo can help us penetrate the european and american markets.”

even though lu zhou didn’t know a lot about business, after hearing chen yushan’s explanation, he nodded with confidence.

“okay then, if you think it’s a good buy, then buy it... but, will elon sell it to us this easily? i think he hates me.”

chen yushan smiled confidently and said, “don’t worry, i’ll handle it.”

lu zhou nodded and realized something important.

“oh yeah, how much is it going to cost?”

chen yushan: “not much, just a couple hundred million.”

lu zhou: “... usd?”

chen yushan: “yeah!”

lu zhou: “...”

f*ck sake!

i agreed too early.

i knew you have to spend money to make money, but i can't help but think about the money disappearing from my bank account...

it hurts!

after lu zhou hung up the phone, he leaned in his chair and looked at the calendar on the wall.

“it's already june...”

time really flies by.

2022 is almost over...

lu zhou remembered he still had to give an answer to wang peng.

he had hardly gotten a break this year.

whether it was ilhcrc or star sky technology, he had barely had the chance to do any research.

even chen yang, whom he poached from beijing, had begun making some progress on the hodge conjecture.

he couldn't just remain like this forever.

lu zhou was wondering what he should tell wang peng when a text bubble suddenly popped up on his computer screen.

xiao ai: [master, you have mail. (๑•̀ㅂ•́)و✧]

mail?

lu zhou had never seen this email address before.

even though xiao ai could find who the sender was, there was no need for that yet.

lu zhou opened the email and raised his eyebrows with interest.

the email was short.

[i just arrived in jinling, and i know a good restaurant in the city. are you free to talk and eat?]

what intrigued him wasn't the short email.

it was the name at the bottom of the email.

"david lawrence?"

lu zhou felt this name looked familiar...

Chapter 993 But I Refuse!

[just went through customs, about to board the plane.]

[first of all, congratulations to star sky technology for evading the antitrust investigation and patent litigation. we hope that our companies can continue to abide by laws and regulations.]

[also, in response to the comments, i don't know what people are angry about. the international trade commission rejected the department of commerce investigation. even though you have damaged the interests of our country, as long as you abide by the rules, we will protect your rights, this is the american spirit...]

"... these bunch of dogs, tagging me in any article they can, it's not like i'm an international relations expert..."

inside a restaurant, lu zhou shook his head and wondered why mr. lawrence hadn't arrived yet. suddenly, he noticed someone walking toward him.

the other person also noticed him. they walked toward him with a smile.

"long time no see."

lawrence put down his bag and sat across from lu zhou. he rested his hands on the table and said, "time really flies by, it's been so long since you left princeton."

“oh, yeah.”

even though there were differences between western and asian standards, lu zhou could still tell that this guy was a well-dressed person.

david lawrence.

lu zhou finally matched the name with a face.

lu zhou finally remembered that when he first arrived in princeton, this history professor recommended him to join the ivy food club.

he felt nostalgic thinking about this.

lawrence had always been obsessed with finance; he only went into history research due to the pressure from his father.

however, it seemed like he was doing quite well for himself since he was now working in finance.

after staring at lawrence for a while, lu zhou spoke.

“you’ve changed.”

lawrence smiled and replied, “everyone changes, aren’t you the same? from a pure mathematician to a world-renowned scholar... and me, i never wanted to go into history, but —”

“i mean you’ve gotten older.”

lawrence nearly choked on the water. he put down the cup and coughed.

he wiped his mouth with a napkin and smiled awkwardly.

“i was still in my late twenties back then... but you haven’t changed a bit at all.”

lu zhou smiled and put his phone into his pocket.

“thanks... but i’m quite surprised, i didn’t expect you to study history.”

“history is just my hobby, finance is my real passion.” lawrence smiled and said, “of course, reading those books inside firestone library did help my career a little bit.”

lu zhou: “like what?”

lawrence: “isn’t there a saying? history repeats itself.”

lu zhou smiled and said, “not necessarily, at least not in mathematics. in order to solve new problems, we have to create new ideas, deduce new ideas from old theories, and jump out of the original framework... it would be great if history could provide me with a little help, but that’s often not the case.”

like riemann’s hypothesis.

he had read almost every paper on riemann’s hypothesis over the past century and a half; however, none of them were able to inspire him.

it wasn’t until he introduced differentiable manifold theories into complex analysis did he finally make some amount of progress.

which was, the hyperelliptic curve analysis method.

however, this was only considered a small progress. he still had a long way to go, and for now, he couldn’t see the finish line.

“oh, really? no wonder mathematics is so fascinating to you.”

“i guess so...” lu zhou smiled at lawrence and said, “speaking of which, did you come all the way here to visit me?”

“it wouldn’t be truthful to say i didn’t.” lawrence smiled and said, “want to join forces?”

lu zhou didn’t know why, but he felt like this guy was a little unusual, and it gave him the chills.

“... join forces? on what?”

“whether it’s scientific research or business, money is involved in everything.” lawrence smiled and said, “for example, you plan on buying evgo, right?”

the f*ck?

how did you know?

lu zhou gave him a surprised look but didn't say anything, because he didn't know if lawrence happened to make a lucky guess, or if lawrence really knew.

however, it was as if lawrence saw through lu zhou's mind. lawrence smiled and spoke.

"don't be nervous, i'm not testing you. if you don't want to admit it, i understand... then, let's just say, hypothetically, you plan on acquiring evgo and use it to penetrate the us market."

lawrence cleared his throat and spoke in a calm voice.

"there aren't many electric vehicles in america, but it is still profitable. especially after the fusion power station in california, the demand for electric vehicles will surge. it is not difficult to take a part of the market share, you just have to invest wisely. our analysts have calculated that if you want an 80% coverage of charging stations in the west coast, you would have to spend at least us\$5 billion.

"this is not a small number. i'm sure even a bank would think twice before lending you this amount. but i'm different, we're... investors. not only can we provide you the necessary resources, but we can also get you out of trouble and ensure your business runs smoothly."

lawrence smiled at lu zhou, who was sitting across from him.

"and that goes beyond charging stations.

"the funds of boston financial group can easily help you become the world's top high-tech company. no one will be able to stop you, you can do whatever you want..."

lawrence quietly looked at lu zhou while waiting for him to reply.

time slowly passed by...

twenty seconds passed by.

lu zhou suddenly smiled and spoke.

"sounds interesting."

lawrence smiled as if he had just won the olympics. he reached out his hand and spoke.

“then let’s—”

lu zhou: “but no, thanks.”

lawrence: “...???”

Chapter 994 Pirate Culture

There was an awkward atmosphere in the air.

It was almost as if time and space were frozen.

Lawrence’s face stiffened; it was as if his smile turned into stone.

However, admirably, he still maintained his demeanor and retracted his right hand like a robot.

Time quickly passed by.

The awkward atmosphere continued to entwine around the dining table.

The silence was broken by the waiter bringing food.

Lawrence coughed and spoke unhappily.

“Can I know why? I think my proposal is quite attractive.”

“Attractive for you.” Lu Zhou said calmly, “I know there is no such thing as a free meal in the world. If I accept your investment, that means we have to give up equity. Is that correct?”

Lawrence: “Of course... Like you said, there’s no such thing as a free meal. But there is such a thing as a win-win situation! We can both become richer by working together!”

Lu Zhou: “Correct, but will Star Sky Technology be yours or mine? Will it be Chinese or American?”

“That... depends on how you define it.” Lawrence paused for a second and said, “But does it really matter who owns it? Star Sky Technology could be worth US\$100 billion. You might have less equity, but your net worth will still increase.”

Lu Zhou said, “I think it matters.”

Lu Zhou spoke in a serious tone.

“For me, it is important to research whatever I want, that is the important part. That is why I founded the Jinling Institute for Advanced Study and Star Sky Technology. If you told me I can turn 100 billion into 200 billion... Why should I care?”

The atmosphere at the table was silent.

After a while, Lawrence loosened his shoulders and leaned back on his chair.

“I see... I thought we had the possibility of working together, I thought you could see the mutual benefits.”

Lu Zhou smiled and said, “I thought you Americans like to follow rules, shouldn’t you talk to the Star Sky Technology CEO about this?”

Lawrence smiled and said, “Rules? You must not know America well at all.”

Lu Zhou: “Oh, yeah?”

“Ships that first colonized America more or less were filled with pirates, and the ‘good citizens’ only set foot on America on the premise that it would be beneficial for them. When times got hard, they would loot indigenous people and take what they wanted.

“There is a manuscript about John Adams in the Firestone Library, and it details his research on this cultural phenomenon. He understands Americans at such a deep level.

“And I call this cultural phenomenon, piracy.”

Lu Zhou looked at Lawrence’s smile and frowned.

“I’m surprised.”

“About what?”

“In Chinese history, we often use piracy as a derogatory term... In our culture, pirates are not romanticized.”

“It is equally disgraceful in our culture. Pirates were hanged, left to be eaten by crows...” Lawrence shrugged and said, “But if all you need is a boat and some men, then a lot of people would turn to sin.”

Lawrence pushed against the table and stood up.

“I just want to ask you one question. I don’t want to become your enemy, but... the world is often controlled by invisible powers.

“Just like how gravitational forces keep us on the ground, history repeats itself. Nothing can stop this, no one person, company, or even country. But if one follows the invisible power, they will be rewarded by history. Do you know what I mean?”

Lu Zhou: “No, I believe in science, not metaphysics.”

Except when I’m doing a prize draw.

Lawrence: “Okay, then... Are you really not going to think about it?”

“No need.”

“That’s unfortunate.” Lawrence sighed and said, “Maybe next time, you won’t be against small players like ExxonMobil or Tesla.”

“Oh, yeah?”

Lu Zhou gently smiled.

“We’ll see what happens.”

...

After that, Lawrence left without eating.

Even though Lawrence said he was full, Lu Zhou noticed that Lawrence didn’t eat a single bite.

But honestly, Lu Zhou thought this restaurant was pretty good, so he might come here again.

After eating his meal, Lu Zhou left the restaurant and went into his car, which was parked at the entrance.

When he got in his car, Wang Peng had just finished a phone call.

“Where are we going?”

“To Zhongshan International.”

“Okay.”

The car went on the road.

Lu Zhou was sitting in the back seat when he took out his phone.

He was about to finish the article he was reading, but the article was no longer there.

Hmm...

Was it removed?

Damn it, I forgot to save it.

Lu Zhou shook his head and opened Weibo.

He was about to interact with his fans when he suddenly got an email notification.

He saw that the email was from the International Mathematical Union.

Lu Zhou saw the email address and had a headache.

Over the past few days, he had been cogitating on whether or not he should go to the conference. He knew the email was probably the IMU asking him to upload his 60-minute report thesis online.

Lu Zhou opened the email and began to think about how he should euphemistically reject them, but he suddenly froze.

After a while, Lu Zhou looked at Wang Peng and spoke.

“Wang Peng.”

“What’s wrong?”

“I’m going to St. Petersburg in August.”

“Okay, I’ll arrange for you... Just wondering, did you make progress on Riemann’s hypothesis?”

“No... It has nothing to do with the report.”

Wang Peng: “Then?”

Lu Zhou put down his phone and spoke.

“To collect a prize.”

Chapter 995 Sneaky People

Jinling Institute for Advanced Study.

A piece of large experimental equipment shaped like a barrel lying on its side was inside a laboratory.

There were three console displays next to this “barrel”.

A group of workers wearing dust-free and anti-static clothing stood in front of the console. They nervously operated this equipment under the command of Professor Wu Tianqun.

Director Li was observing everything from a distance, and he looked emotional as he put his hands behind his back.

After a couple of minutes, the director suddenly spoke to Lu Zhou.

“The Americans screwed us.”

Lu Zhou glanced at him and spoke.

“Screwed?”

Director Li nodded.

“Yeah, haven’t you noticed? They dismissed the Department of Commerce investigation against Star Sky Technology on the grounds of insufficient evidence, but that’s not the whole story. Once the Department of Commerce collects enough evidence, they can restart the investigation... That is totally a possibility.”

Lu Zhou nodded his head.

Damn these Americans are sneaky.

Quite an annoying tactic.

Basically, the White House could restart the antitrust investigation any time they wanted.

However, Lu Zhou wasn’t worried about this. After all, Chen Yushan had probably thought of a solution already.

Why should he worry about this...

When he had a CEO?

Seeing how Lu Zhou was unfazed, Director Li paused for a second and spoke.

“The Americans are coming after our high-tech companies. Their ideal Chinese companies are companies that claim to be high tech, but work at the low end of the industrial chain and have the smallest profit margins. Once our companies surpass them in a field, they’ll feel the pressure and fight back.

“I’d be willing to bet that within two years after the California nuclear core is delivered, they’ll be able to figure out the secrets of controllable fusion reactors and start attacking again.

“But you don’t have to worry too much.”

Lu Zhou carelessly smiled and spoke.

“Actually, I talked about this with Academician Wang Zengguang and Pan Changhong. We don’t judge others on their worst days, but we should always be prepared. When push comes to shove, we must ensure that we have the initiative.”

Director Li started to feel nervous.

“You’re not telling me that you left a back door in the nuclear core, right?”

Director Li wasn’t against doing this, but Lu Zhou doing this on his own initiative would be a little too scary. It would be like a citizen having their own nuclear switch.

“You’re overthinking. How would that even be possible?” Lu Zhou smiled as Director Li sighed in relief. He said, “Also, there’s no need for that...”

“The controllable fusion reactor control scheme and the plasma turbulence control scheme are written by us.”

It would be extremely easy to make the control scheme do some funny stuff.

Director Li spoke.

“Oh, I see, I thought you left something inside the nuclear core.”

Lu Zhou laughed.

“Why would I do that?”

While they were speaking, the experiment was over.

The slowly rotating barrel stopped, a metal slot popped out, revealing a thumbnail-sized chip in front of the researchers.

This wasn’t their first time succeeding.

Even though they were excited, no one cheered.

Professor Wu Tianqun skillfully removed the chip from the metal slot and carefully loaded it into a brown glass vessel. He then turned toward Director Li and Lu Zhou.

“The experiment was successful.

“So far, we’ve been able to create chips with 3 million transistors per square millimeter. Even though this is just a laboratory experiment, we’re getting closer and closer to 30 million. Also, we’ve found a way to improve the integration of the transistors...”

“I’m sure that we’ll be able to achieve our goal within a year!”

“Good job.”

Lu Zhou nodded toward Professor Wu Tianqun and took the brown glass from his hand. He then handed it to Director Li.

Director Li took the brown glass container and carefully examined it for a while. He then handed it to the secretary standing behind him.

He watched the secretary carefully place the chip into a metal suitcase. He then looked at Lu Zhou and spoke solemnly.

“I’ll take it back to Beijing and hand it over to the experts at the Institute of Semiconductors!”

Lu Zhou nodded.

“Thank you.”

Even though the experiment was successful, one sample was not enough. After some data collection, Professor Wu Tianqun quickly began the next set of experiments.

Lu Zhou and Director Li had nothing else to do here; they turned around and left the laboratory.

Director Li suddenly remembered something and spoke to Lu Zhou.

“Oh yeah, you plan on going to St. Petersburg in August?”

Lu Zhou gave him a strange look.

“Yeah, is there a problem?”

“No problem, traveling is good. You’ll be the representative of our academic community.” Director Li smiled and said, “Speaking of which, did you receive military training in college?”

Lu Zhou said, "Of course, it's mandatory."

That counted toward my GPA!

"I guess... What about shooting training?"

"I haven't... Just tell me what you want..." Lu Zhou sighed and said, "You must want something from me."

"Hey! Am I that kind of person?" The old man smiled and said, "But I do have something I need you to do, it's for your own good."

"What?"

"Even though our security department has been in contact with Russian personnel, accidents still happen, right? After all, you're not just an ordinary scholar anymore; if anything happens, it'll be a loss to humanity—"

Lu Zhou: "Just say it."

Director Li smiled awkwardly and said, "Just let our guys train you for a week. We don't expect you to defend yourself, but it'll make it easier for us to rescue you."

Lu Zhou: "...?!"

What the hell?

Chapter 996 Aerospace Forces

Eastern Theater Command General Hospital.

After Wang Peng parked the car, he opened the trunk and took out two large duffel bags.

The bags contained some fruit, milk, and other goods.

Wang Peng closed the trunk and walked toward the elevator with the two bags.

A nurse in a white coat was writing behind a special ward reception desk.

She noticed Wang Peng walking in, so she asked, "Hello, sir, who are you?"

"Wang Peng, visiting a wounded buddy. His name is Li Gaoliang. Here's my ID."

The nurse took the ID from Wang Peng and frowned.

She was wondering why a Ministry of State Security member was visiting someone from the army.

After all, Li Gaoliang was not an ordinary person. Apparently, he was connected to sensitive medical experimental equipment, so anyone outside of his family would have a hard time visiting him.

Most of the people who visited him were experts from the Chinese Academy of Sciences...

"Sorry, please wait a second."

The nurse stood up and walked into the office.

Wang Peng smiled at the guard that was staring intently at him and stood there without a worry in the world.

After a couple of minutes, the nurse came back with a doctor in his sixties.

Wang Peng recognized this doctor; his name was Zhou Youde. Wang Peng met him when he visited Lu Zhou. Apparently, he was a celebrity doctor and was in the Changjiang Scholars Program.

Wang Peng and Zhou Youde made eye contact.

Zhou Youde immediately recognized him.

"I... know you!" Zhou Youde said as he stared at Wang Peng. He then said, "You're Academician Lu's security, right? I saw you next to him last time..."

Wang Peng smiled and nodded.

"Kind of, Professor Zhou, long time no see."

Even though Wang Peng was technically a driver, he carried weapons on him at all times.

“Come in... Oh, come on, what are you guys doing, give him some water, don’t let him wait outside like this!”

The nurse lowered her head in shame as Wang Peng spoke.

“She was just looking out for the patient, it’s fine.”

The nurse quietly whispered, “Yeah... I didn’t know if he was a spy or something.”

“Enough!”

Zhou Youde turned toward Wang Peng and spoke politely.

“Let’s go inside, Battalion Commander Li is in the rehabilitation center.”

Wang Peng nodded and followed Zhou Youde to the rehabilitation center.

On the way to the rehabilitation center, he saw many people walking with crutches or in wheelchairs. This was one of the best hospitals in the Eastern Theater Command area. Most people here were in the military.

Wang Peng looked at Professor Zhou and spoke.

“How is Battalion Commander Li’s recovery going?”

Zhou Youde nodded and said, “I don’t even believe it myself. The surgeon said he would be lucky to be able to live in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. But now, he’s walking, running, and even playing basketball. His reaction speed has even increased.”

In fact, that was an understatement.

With titanium alloy bones and electric motion systems, once the brain adapted to the new inputs, dunking the ball was a piece of cake...

Of course, then again, it would be impossible to wear this device to the Olympic games. This was more powerful than doping.

Zhou Youde paused for a second and looked at Wang Peng. He spoke in a solemn tone.

“... Please thank Academician Lu for me! His neural interface system is a godsend! Once the technology matures, thousands of people will be able to function normally again!”

“I will pass on your thanks, I’m sure he will be happy.”

Zhou Youde nodded at Wang Peng’s promise.

“Okay, thanks!”

They soon arrived at the rehabilitation center.

There weren’t many people inside. In fact, there was only one person.

A man in a singlet stood in the middle of the wooden floor. It looked like he was practicing shadow boxing, which Wang Peng instantly recognized.

What surprised Wang Peng was his speed and agility; it was like he had never been injured as he moved around like a snake.

Wang Peng estimated that if he got punched in the face, he would probably get knocked out.

Zhou Youde was about to shout at Li Gaoliang, but Wang Peng stopped him.

“Let him continue.”

“Okay then, you guys talk, I have to go.”

“Okay, take it easy.”

Zhou Youde walked away as Wang Peng continued to watch Li Gaoliang.

A couple of minutes went by.

Li Gaoliang took a break and was about to drink some water when he heard someone speak from the entrance.

“Not bad!”

Li Gaoliang smiled at Wang Peng and walked over.

“What brings you here?”

“I finally had some spare time, so I came to visit you. How are you? How’s recovery?”

Li Gaoliang laughed and said, “It’s amazing! Come, let me practice on you.”

“Forget about it, I don’t want to hurt you.” Wang Peng smiled and placed the bags on the floor.

“Professor Lu wanted to visit you in person, but he went to training. This bag is mine, that bag is his. Since you’re recovering so well, I won’t drop them off in your room, you can carry them yourself.”

Li Gaoliang sighed as he looked at the bags.

“Ah, you’re too kind.”

Wang Peng shook his head and spoke seriously.

“Not kind, also...”

He put on a more serious face and spoke.

“Other than to see you, I also came here for a mission.”

Li Gaoliang’s eyes lit up.

“Mission? I can return to the field?”

“You might,” Wang Peng said. “The higher-ups want me to ask you, you have two options, one is to retire and move to a—”

Li Gaoliang interrupted Wang Peng and said, “Give me the second option, I’m in my thirties, I’m not going to retire.”

“I knew you would say that.” Wang Peng sighed and said, “The second option is to join the aerospace forces in the Eastern Theater Command. If you’re interested, you can get in. You’ll be the same rank as before, but there will be lesser people under your command.”

“Aerospace forces?” Li Gaoliang asked, “What is that?”

“Aerospace forces...” Wang Peng didn’t know how to explain, so he said, “Basically, we need to train new forces to keep up with the times, we need troops above the low-Earth orbit.”

Li Gaoliang: “What is this nonsense? I don’t know how to fly planes!”

“You don’t need to fly a plane; the higher-ups mainly want you for management and logistics.”

Li Gaoliang: “Can I go back to my original position?”

“I’m afraid not...”

Li Gaoliang sighed and waved his hand.

“Okay then, I’ll go to the aerospace forces... It’s better than retiring.”

Wang Peng nodded and continued, “Okay then, I have something else to tell you.”

Li Gaoliang: “What?”

Wang Peng: “The higher-ups want you to register within 2 days and complete basic training as soon as possible. There will be a drill in thirty days. The Eastern Theater Command aerospace forces will participate.”

Li Gaoliang had a serious look.

“Drill? Can you tell me more?”

Wang Peng nodded.

“Counter-terrorism, overseas support...”

“And hostage rescue!”

Chapter 997 Archimedes Trouble

Boom!

A round was fired out of the muzzle.

Lu Zhou felt the heat of the bullet on his arms. The shell peeled from the casing, leaving behind a trace of smoke.

However, he didn't have time to react; his attention was totally focused on pressing the trigger.

Bang!

Bang!

The gun fired ten times.

All within ten seconds.

Lu Zhou turned off the safety switch and placed the gun on the table. He took off his noise-canceling ear muffs as Yan Yan spoke to him.

"Hit half of them in the chest target... Not bad, it only took you three days to get to this level. It took me a week to get to your level. Is there anything mathematicians can't do? Do you calculate the trajectory of the bullet?"

"Of course not, you can't really apply mathematics. At most, mathematics makes me a faster learner at other things." Lu Zhou looked at the target and said, "Also, this is a fixed target. If the target and I were moving, I wouldn't be able to hit anything."

It had been two weeks since he arrived at this training base on the outskirts of Haizhou.

Over the past two weeks, with the help of Yan Yan and people from the General Staff Department, he had been receiving training in shooting, first aid, and evacuation.

Even though the training wasn't difficult, it was excruciatingly boring.

After the excitement of being able to fire a gun wore off, the shootings made his wrist and shoulders hurt.

"Don't be too pessimistic." Yan Yan patted Lu Zhou's shoulder and said, "How about try shooting a moving target later?"

"No, thanks. It hurts my wrists." Lu Zhou shook his head and said, "Also, will I get to carry a gun?"

Yan Yan answered without any hesitation, “No.”

Even though Lu Zhou knew she would say this, he still couldn’t help but roll his eyes.

“... Then what’s the point.”

Lu Zhou hated wasting time on meaningless things.

“Practicing isn’t for you to carry a gun everywhere, it’s for you to know how it works. More importantly, it gives you a basic understanding of the types of guns...”

Yan Yan contemplated for a second before she shrugged and said, “... So you won’t pee your pants when you see a gun.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

Pee my pants...

What an exaggeration.

Lu Zhou felt like he would be scared in an intense scenario, but he definitely wouldn’t pee his pants.

Lu Zhou spoke.

“So you have experience in this area then?”

Yan Yan paused for a second and glared at him.

“... Don’t talk back to me! I’m your teacher, just listen!”

She cleared her throat and said seriously, “Shooting practice is over, theory class is next! First question, what should you do if your convoy was attacked, but you survived?”

Lu Zhou: “Get out of the car and find a bunker?”

Yan Yan said, “Wrong! The correct answer is to stay in the car. Congratulations, you just made yourself twice as likely to die. Trust in your driver, they are soldiers, they know what to do! Normally, there are three

identical vehicles in your fleet, so getting off the vehicle will reveal your position!

“Second question. After you got off the car, you heard a gunshot, and it came from a tall building nearby. The attacker has a high power sniper rifle, what would you do?”

Lu Zhou wanted to go back in the car, but he thought about what if the sniper had armor-piercing bullets?

So, he changed his answer and spoke.

“... Run in a zigzag line?”

That’s probably the right answer.

I mean, I can’t run in a straight line, right?

However, Yan Yan began scolding him.

“Zigzag? What is this, Fortnite? Congratulations, you just doubled your chance of death again! The right answer is to find cover and stay put, and wait for someone to rescue you! Third question, what do you do if someone points a gun at you. This question is as easy as it gets.”

Lu Zhou: “...”

F*ck sake!

What does she want me to say?

Apparently, this is an easy question.

A nitrogen shield from my system inventory?

It should work.

But it’s not like I can tell her that.

Also, that thing is one-time use only, and I don’t know how powerful it is since I’ve never tried it.

Lu Zhou contemplated for a while and wasn’t able to find a good solution.

Logically speaking, I'm a mathematician that spent his entire life in a library. It's not like I can do anything if a trained soldier points a gun to my face?

Unless that soldier was kicked in the head by a donkey.

Lu Zhou spoke in an uncertain tone.

"... Close my eyes and hope for the best?"

Yan Yan sighed.

"... I'm so done with you, how do you always answer so incorrectly."

Lu Zhou would certainly die if this were a real-life scenario.

However, this time, Yan Yan didn't ridicule him.

After a while, she spoke in a serious tone.

"When the time comes... Just surrender."

Lu Zhou: "Isn't that embarrassing?"

Yan Yan said, "It's better than dying! Remember, your life is the most important thing! You're not just an ordinary person, don't do anything stupid."

Don't worry, I'll try not to.

Lu Zhou sighed and spoke.

"... If it's so dangerous I should just not go."

Lu Zhou didn't want to bother others.

Even though the International Congress of Mathematicians was interesting, not to mention the organizer was going to give him a prize, he didn't expect it to be such a hassle.

He had already been training here for two weeks.

He would rather stay in his room and study mathematics problems.

Yan Yan quickly spoke.

“No, don’t, you’ve already gone through two weeks of training, it’s a waste to give up now. Also, I’m just making sure you’re prepared. Better be safe than sorry. I’m just making sure that, in the event of an unlikely scenario, you’re more likely to stay safe.”

Lu Zhou: “If someone as skilled as Wang Peng attacks me, I don’t think there’s anything I can do.”

Yan Yan said, “But you can’t just give up! At least find a safe place to hide.”

“Then?”

“Then we’ll save you!”

“Save me... all the way in Russia?”

“Sort of.”

Lu Zhou said, “How do you plan on going there?”

Yan Yan smiled mysteriously.

“You’ll know in two weeks.”

Chapter 998 Steel Is Our Footprin

The beginning of July.

A military base in the Eastern Theater Command.

Military vehicles drove through the camp, preparing for the upcoming exercise.

A weirdly-shaped silver-white plane was sitting in the middle of the camp, out in the open.

With two short and two long wings, as well as a large cylindrical engine, it didn’t look like something that was able to fly in the air. However, its perfect success rate was able to dispel any worries.

This plane was named Starlight.

After the spacecraft was delivered to the Eastern Theater Command, the aerospace forces gave it a more domineering name.

Which was, Thunderbird.

Just like thunder, it could soar hundreds of kilometers above the sky.

This aerospaceplane could be used to transport equipment to low-Earth orbit, as well as carry ballistic missile attacks in outer space.

Li Gaoliang got off the military truck. He was wearing special combat clothing and a rifle across his chest. When he glanced at the silver aerospaceplane, he couldn't help but feel amazed.

He didn't expect technology to progress at a rate far beyond his imagination; he would have never imagined the military to have this kind of technology.

It had been a month since he was discharged from the hospital and put into the aerospace forces.

This past month had been more rewarding than anything he had ever done.

He saw weapons he had never heard of before, pieces of equipment that he didn't know existed, and was even taught secret combat tactics.

According to his instructors, they were the world's most technologically advanced military base.

Both the requirements for deployment speed and scope of the aerospace forces were far higher than traditional marine and army troops.

They had extremely strict requirements for survival ability and physical fitness.

Their role was to quickly cross the front line during combat and perform precise strikes on important enemy targets. During peaceful times, they had to protect important facilities and dignitaries.

Apparently, their training tactics were developed by several professors at the National Defence University. And that this was the first time the training plan was put to use.

While Li Gaoliang was reciting the training outline in his head, a military officer in camouflage walked in front of them.

“Attention!”

“Yes, sir!”

The officer looked at the row of soldiers and nodded.

“Drill exercise begins in ten minutes.

“I hope you all have done your studies, so I won’t waste our time.

“I just have one thing to say. The faster you are, the more likely you will survive. Be ruthless, treat this drill like a real war!

“Now, tell me, what’s our first code of conduct!”

Li Gaoliang and his teammates standing behind him yelled, “To never surrender and evade capture!”

The officer standing in front of the soldiers shouted, “Let’s go!”

The soldiers began moving.

A total of twenty people were divided into five groups. They boarded the Thunderbird aerospaceplane in an orderly manner.

Li Gaoliang sat in the cabin seat and connected the life support system to his combat uniform. He then counted down in his heart and waited patiently.

Soon, he felt a gentle vibration from his chair, shaking his entire body.

Vehicles near the aerospaceplane have been evacuated. With the ground command center’s guidance, the Thunderbird slowly accelerated on the runway and took off.

A beam of hot blue plasma was ejected from the engine as the aircraft flew toward deep space.

Li Gaoliang looked at the clouds outside the window and took a deep breath.

They would reach low-Earth orbit in half an hour.

And from there, they would complete the world’s highest skydiving record...

A teammate's voice was heard in the communication channel.

"Jesus, this is my first time flying this high."

"We're at 20 kilometers right now... Already above the limit of normal planes."

"This is my first time skydiving at this altitude."

"What if your parachute doesn't open?"

"Shut up!"

For most people sitting in the cabin, this was their first time flying at such high altitudes. They were bound to feel a little nervous.

Therefore, Li Gaoliang didn't stop his teammates from chatting.

Most of the time, chatting was a way to relieve pressure and nerves. Even though he preferred to close his eyes and rest his mind, other people coped in different ways.

Li Gaoliang looked away from the window and shut his eyes.

In order to perform his best, he wanted to meditate for a while.

However, one of his teammates talked to him.

"Captain, are we going to a space station?"

Li Gaoliang cogitated for a second.

Before the exercise drill, the officer told them they had to transfer to another "airplane" to complete the sky diving exercise, but he didn't tell them where to transfer.

The Moon Palace was an international scientific research institution, which was obviously inappropriate for military purposes.

As for the other...

Li Gaoliang thought for a second and spoke.

"There's no space station."

“But we do have a Magpie Bridge.”

...

Li Gaoliang didn't expect his guess to be correct.

The Thunderbird aerospaceplane slowly approached the dark spacecraft that was the Magpie Bridge.

Due to their distorted sense of distance in space, it wasn't until the two spacecraft were close enough that Li Gaoliang could finally see that Magpie Bridge he once saw on television.

Of course, this Magpie Bridge was different from the one that traveled between the Earth and Moon every day.

Just like the Thunderbird they were riding on, the “Magpie Bridge” was just its model name.

Its real name was the “Great Wall”.

The Great Wall was China's first and only carrier-type ship sailing in outer space, just like its name implied, it was defending China's outermost terrain.

Normally, the Great Wall was cruising outside in synchronous orbit, with four people stationed on duty. But when necessary, it could be used as the aerospace forces headquarters, providing support to all units flying in low-Earth orbit.

The two spacecraft finally completed docking.

Li Gaoliang sighed in relief, but he wasn't relaxed at all.

Up until now, everything was done by the spacecraft pilots and the ground command center.

Their training mission had only just begun!

Li Gaoliang released the life support system and led his team to the spacecraft connection port, reaching the main cabin of the Great Wall.

Inside the cabin, there were five black pyramid-shaped airborne modules.

Just like their training, everyone boarded the airborne module and checked their weapons and ammunition.

Li Gaoliang tried to control his breathing as he completed his tasks and closed the airborne module door.

The second he closed the door, he heard his commander's voice through his headset.

"Great Wall is entering orbit!"

"Current altitude is 117.4 kilometers, reaching the target area in two minutes!"

Li Gaoliang started breathing harder and harder.

Even though he couldn't see outside the cabin, he felt like he was one step from falling out of the Great Wall.

They were 100 kilometers above ground.

There was no sound here.

There wasn't even air.

However, they could still feel a sense of coldness.

"Target area reached, remember what your mission is!"

"Good luck, soldiers!"

Chapter 999 We Can Do It!

Lu Zhou swore that this was the most spectacular fireworks he had ever seen.

Of course, it was also the most expensive one.

The airborne modules descending from the sky were like meteors that flew through the cold night.

Lu Zhou stood next to a military jeep and looked at the airborne modules through binoculars with a look of shock in his eyes.

After a while, he put away the telescope and spoke emotionally.

“... You guys actually made this thing?”

Lu Zhou was the “hostage” in this anti-terrorist training mission. Therefore, he was in the center of the action.

He had a front-row seat to the show.

Lu Zhou still remembered when they tested the escape capsule on the Skyglow test flight.

Back then, Lu Zhou and Director Li went to the Dzoosotoyn Elisen Desert to select a site for the Garden project. The second Director Li saw the escape capsule, he couldn't keep his eyes off the thing, and he immediately asked about using it in the army.

Due to various reasons, Lu Zhou didn't give him high hopes. He told the director that this thing was equivalent to a space return module with an engine. If the director could handle the costs, he was free to try it out.

Lu Zhou didn't expect Director Li to actually consult an expert and create a military-use escape capsule.

Director Li stood next to Lu Zhou, also with a telescope around his neck. He smiled and spoke.

“Haha, I didn't expect you to be surprised, it seems like the couple hundred million was well spent.”

“... Couple hundred million?”

“Yeah, that was the research and development cost.” Director Li looked at Lu Zhou and said, “Actually, when the Air Force Equipment Department talked to me about this, I was even more surprised than you.

“When this project was initially proposed, not many people were optimistic about it. I thought it was worth a try. I didn't expect the academicians from the Air Force Equipment Research Institute actually made this thing.”

Lu Zhou: “This thing isn't cheap, right?”

Director Li nodded and said, "It's not cheap. Nothing military related is cheap. Fortunately, the aerospace costs aren't high, and the cost of sending people to space is acceptable. Basically, an escape module is about the cost of a medium-range missile, and missiles are one-time use.

"Also, that's just the module itself. If you add the accessories and equipment mounted to the module, it's worth two missiles."

After more than two years of development, the military version of the escape capsule had many advantages over the original "Lightning" capsule.

Just like its name implied, compared to the "Lightning" module, which emphasized on capacity and survivability of crew members, the "Thunder" module emphasized on its airborne tactical abilities.

The best kind of defense was offense. When the module was 50 meters off the ground, it would activate smoke bombs to stealth its landing. It could also discharge explosives and metal fragments for further damage.

The "Thunder" escape capsule also had less food, medicine, and survival tool storage than the Lightning escape capsule. The maximum number of occupants was also decreased from six to four people.

Director Li spoke emotionally.

"But... even though it's a bit expensive, the value we're getting from the airborne module is equivalent to 10 medium-range missiles!"

While they were talking, the airborne capsule descending from the sky had landed on a hill two kilometers away, releasing a cloud of smoke.

Lu Zhou felt the vibration of the ground as he spoke to Yan Yan, who was standing next to the jeep.

"Speaking of which, shouldn't I act like I'm hurt and lie down on the ground?"

Yan Yan smiled and said, "You can, do you want me to help you?"

Lu Zhou looked at his shirt.

"Never mind, I like this shirt."

Director Li suddenly remembered something and said, "By the way, if something does happen... Your life is more important than your shirt."

Lu Zhou: "... I know."

While they were talking, the group of soldiers armed with rifles already arrived at their target area, surrounding the jeep and everyone around it.

"The Thunder squad has reached the target area, target personnel is safe!

"Continue to the next exercise!

"Roger that."

Lu Zhou felt like the captain's voice sounded familiar, but because the soldiers were covered in gear, he couldn't tell who the captain was.

Lu Zhou could sense the captain looking at him.

Lu Zhou smiled at him and didn't interrupt their exercise. He watched as the group of soldiers disappeared into the woods.

It took 49 minutes and 27 seconds from launch for the airborne soldiers to arrive at the hostage area.

On the battlefield, time was everything. Even a 10-minute difference in evacuation time could change the entire battle.

The officer standing next to Lu Zhou looked at his watch and nodded with approval.

"It's a lucky day. If it were raining, we would be in trouble."

Lu Zhou: "It already feels like trouble."

"Oh yeah."

Director Li looked at the flares falling from the sky and nodded.

"Even the Americans can't send a team of soldiers anywhere in the world in under an hour..."

"But we can!"

Chapter 1000 Temporary Suspension

While the anti-terrorism exercise was underway, China was going through the middle of the night.

However, on the other side of the planet, it was noon in North America.

Normally, most of the Pentagon employees would be enjoying a cup of coffee, sitting in their air-conditioned office, or chatting with their colleagues about international politics or the game on Saturday...

However, today was different.

From eight o'clock in the morning until now, the entire Pentagon was like a tightly wound music box; everyone walked around briskly with tension in the air.

The reason for this was because of the anti-terrorism "exercise" that was happening tens of thousands of kilometers away.

Inside a conference room in the Pentagon, a wall covered in screens was displaying satellite images taken from the Okinawa base in Japan. Even though the escape modules flying through the sky could only be seen as a glimpse of light, the landing impact area was clearly visible...

Everyone in the conference room looked at the screens and held their breaths.

After a minute or so, the president spoke.

"Play it back..."

The Secretary of Defense nodded toward a worker, who took a deep breath and pressed a button.

The video began to play on the screen.

Everyone in the conference room witnessed the escape module breaking through the atmosphere, releasing a cloud of smoke on its impact.

Even though they were thousands of kilometers away, it was as if they could smell the smoke through the screen...

After a while, NASA Director Carson spoke.

“F*ck sake! Terrorism exercises my as*... What kind of terrorism exercise uses this kind of equipment?”

Of course, he was angry.

But for some reason, the entire conference room became silent. Several senior officials looked at each other, including the president.

Director Carson noticed this silence, so he paused for a second and remained quiet.

After a long time, Kevin, the Chief of Staff, broke the silence.

“The people inside the capsule didn’t die, this is impossible...”

The Pentagon aerospace expert pushed the glasses up the bridge of his nose and said, “The speed of the airborne capsule through the low altitude was fast, but its speed upon landing is actually not that fast. The smoke is likely not due to the impact. It was probably due to weapons, such as smoke bombs—”

The president interrupted the aerospace expert and spoke.

“Is the analysis report done? About the equipment identification.”

The Pentagon’s Defence Minister and Intelligence Chief looked at each other. The Intelligence Chief spoke.

“The report is out...”

Soon after, a report was delivered to the conference room.

The president took the report and began reading it line by line.

Time quickly passed by.

Everyone was waiting for him to finish reading the report.

Kevin was sitting next to the president. He felt like the president's fingers were trembling.

Actually, Kevin was right.

Even the President himself didn't know how to explain what he was feeling.

Less than 50 minutes of flight time.

Theoretically, this capsule could deploy to any corner of the world within an hour. Whether it was Antarctica or the Amazon forest, the White House or the Pentagon...

There was no place on planet Earth that was safe. Any office building could be broken into at any moment.

More importantly, these paratroopers could bypass any legal airspace!

This sounded a little scary...

Somehow, the conference room went into chaos.

"It's time to create strict international conventions to limit this evil weapon. We should increase our airspace altitude! We should also expand the international treaty and prohibit unconventional weapons entering outer space orbit! Not a single bullet should be allowed in space!"

"Are you crazy? Our airspace altitude limit is only 35 kilometers! You want to raise it higher? Even if we do raise it, what can we possibly do if they disobey our laws? It's not like our missiles can reach their spacecraft."

Airspace altitudes were not strictly defined by international laws. Generally speaking, the lowest airspace height for a recognized satellite was 100 kilometers. In the United States, the upper limit for aircraft was 35 kilometers. After all, America had aircraft that could go beyond 35 kilometers, allowing them to "legally" fly over certain areas.

However, anything beyond 110 kilometers wasn't bound by international laws.

Even if the most advanced air defense radar could detect aircraft traveling in this area, the means of enforcing this law were quite limited.

Forget about a spacecraft that could maneuver and change the trajectory.

Even hitting a stationary satellite at that altitude would be difficult.

It was almost impossible for them to stop the aerospace paratroopers.

“Are we just going to let them patrol over our heads? China is provoking us! We should take the necessary responses!”

“But that won’t ease any political tensions, it will only make it worse!”

“Make it worse? So we’re supposed to just surrender?”

The conference room was a mess. The workers split into two sides, yelling in each other’s faces.

“Enough!”

An angry roar interrupted the argument in the room.

The president slammed the report on the table and looked around the conference room. He then looked at his Chief of Staff and spoke.

“Kevin, I want to hear your opinion.”

Kevin went silent for a while.

“... Their military exercise is not necessarily directed at us.

“According to the CIA, this exercise might be for Professor Lu’s visit to St. Petersburg in August. It’s for them to respond as quickly as possible in an event of an unlikely scenario.”

The Secretary of Defense frowned.

“He’s visiting Russia?”

Kevin nodded.

“Yeah, apparently, he’s attending the ICM conference.”

Secretary of Defense: “...”

Pentagon officials: “...”

Even though they knew how important Professor Lu was to the Chinese government, they couldn't believe that the Chinese were willing to provide military support for a scholar attending a conference...

They had no idea what to say.

Kevin looked at the president and spoke.

"According to the CIA's report, this is a good opportunity to get rid of any tension between the two countries... My suggestion is to stay cautious before we find out more about their intentions."

"I know this," the President said impatiently. He noticed that everyone was looking at him, so he spoke.

"Of course, just in case, I'll call the CIA director."

Half of the people in the conference room were relieved.

Even though Kevin was relieved, he didn't show any emotion.

Ever since the Cold War, America had been a super country. But now, they were the ones who were worried about other countries.

Kevin smiled bitterly and nodded.

"That would be wise..."